

P. La Vergne In. Printed for W. Freeman in Fleet Street. M. Vander Gucht Sculp.



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103 h

THE SICK MAN *VISITED*;

AND

Furniſh'd with *Inſtructions, Meditations,* and *Prayers,* ſuitable to his Condition, for putting him in Mind of his CHANGE, for ſupporting him under his Diſtemper, and for preparing him for, and carrying him through his laſt Conflict with Death.

By *N. SPINCKES,*
A Presbyter of the Church of *England.*

Boaſt not of to Morrow, for thou knoweſt not what a Day may bring forth. PROV. 27. 1.

Tu tamen Mortem, ut nunquam timeas, ſemper cogita. *Senec. Epiſt.* 30.

12 Bh

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THE

SICK MAN VISITED:

AND

Furnish'd with Instructions, Meditations, and Prayers, [illegible] Condition, for putting him in mind [illegible] for preparing him [illegible] through his [illegible] Death.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM

By N. SPRINCKES,
A Presbyter of the Church of England.

LONDON:
Printed by [illegible] for [illegible] the Queen's Arms [illegible]

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

THE first Occasion of the ensuing Treatise was the Request of a Friend, that I would overlook an old Book upon this Subject, printed in King *James* his Reign, and would put it into modern *English*: Which having undertaken, to avoid the Tediousness of one continued Discourse, without any manner of Division, I thought it necessary to cast mine into several Parts, that at the End of each the Reader might have a Breathing-time, and so proceed to what follows with the better Appetite. And in a little Time finding some Texts of Scripture not so properly applied, as ought to have been, some Things more largely insisted upon than I apprehended necessary, and many on the other Hand that I judged requisite, not meddled with, I resolved to take a different Method, and to frame a Book,

the greateſt Part whereof ſhould be perfectly New, and the reſt ſo alter'd and chang'd, as that it cannot be call'd the ſame. And if what I have written may tend to God's Glory, and the devout Reader's Benefit, I ſhall eſteem my Time happily employ'd.

The Conſideration of Death and Eternity, is a Matter of that vaſt Conſequence, to all who know they have immortal Souls to ſave, that whatever either tends to promote this, or may be ſerviceable in order to the better Effect of it, can never be unſeaſonable, eſpecially when we call to Mind, how exceedingly uncertain the Time of our Stay here is, inſomuch that there is no Man living, who can be ſure that he has an Hour more to live. It was an excellent Petition of *Moſes*, or whoſoever it was that compoſed the Ninetieth Pſalm; *So teach us to number our Days, as that we may apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom*, Ver. 12. Nor is there any ſurer Courſe to become wiſe to the beſt Purpoſes, the promoting God's Glory, and our own everlaſting Welfare, than by accuſtoming our ſelves often to reflect upon, and ſeriouſly weigh with our ſelves, the little Time we have to ſpend here, and the immenſe Concern we have depending upon our good Improvement of it; nor any Folly in the World comparable to theirs, who can be content to

idle away their Time, and misemploy themselves, when for ought they know to the contrary, they may be snatch'd away the next Moment; and so being seized without a due Preparation for a better State, may be sentenced to *Depart into everlasting Fire prepar'd for the Devil, and his Angels.*

There is none who is not continually liable to Sickness, and Death; and who ought not therefore to be always furnish'd with Patience, and Submission to the Divine Will, under the Former, and to be every Day in a Readiness for the Other. And to assist the Christian Reader in order to these weighty Purposes, that so he may be Happy both here and hereafter, is the Design of the following Tract. But then it is incumbent upon him, to apply what is said in it to his own Soul; inasmuch as without this it must needs prove insignificant and useless; the best Advice that can be given in any Case, being of no Advantage, where it is not attended to. A Man may please himself with what he hears, or reads, and it may serve him for Amusement and Diversion; but if this be all the Use he makes of it, he grossly deceives his own Soul, if he think however to be advantag'd by it. Such an one is but like the Man spoken of by St. *James*, who *beholding his natural Face in a Glass,* St. James 1. 23, 24.

goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of Man he was. The true End of Reading, is Improvement. And whosoever therefore would be really benefited by what he reads, must take Care to digest it in his Thoughts, and then to reduce it to Practice, and try to get his Life amended by it.

2 St. Pet. 1. 4. Almighty God has *given us exceeding great and precious Promises*, and will be sure to make them good in his due Time, if we do not senselessly incapacitate our selves for them. But then it is to be remembred, that they are all Conditional, and there is no Hope of attaining to them, but by *partaking of the Divine Nature*, and *escaping the Corruption which is in the World through Lust*. We must cleanse and purify our selves, and serve God faithfully, 2 Tim. 2. 19. *with Reverence and godly Fear*, before we can look upon our selves to be interested in his Favour, and entitled to the promised Salvation. *The Foundation*, the Promise and Covenant of God, *standeth sure*; *having this Seal*, for the Confirmation of it on his Part, that *the Lord knoweth*, and will own *them that are his*: And on their Part, *Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ*, and pretends to be his Disciple and Servant, *depart from all Iniquity*. This is the certain, and the only Way to please God, and to be for ever Happy in the Enjoyment of him.

him. And it is therefore every one's indiſpenſable Duty; and not only when Death looks him in the Face, and he muſt expect to be tranſlated hence, but throughout his whole Life, as he will undoubtedly be convinc'd when he comes to die, if not before.

Oh that Men were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter End! that they would be as ſerious, and have thoſe Thoughts, in their Health and Strength, which they ordinarily have when they come to die! Then they are apt to reflect upon their paſt Lives, with an unfeigned Sorrow and Regret, for not having made a better Improvement of them. And if they had Ten thouſand Worlds at their Diſpoſal, theſe ſhould all go to redeem that Time, which they had ſo vainly ſquander'd away. They will then find to their Sorrow, and Shame, that to prepare themſelves for Heaven is not ſo eaſy a Task as they had imagin'd, but muſt be a Work of Time and Pains, and ought indeed to have been the main Buſineſs of their whole Lives. Which being once granted, it is impoſſible to give a Reaſon, why they ſhould not all immediately ſet about it, with the utmoſt Diligence; that ſince they *have here no abiding City*, they therefore never ceaſe to *ſeek one that is to come.* This is the great End of

our

our living here; and the only Way that God has prescrib'd, in order to a better State. And they who take a contrary Course, may infallibly depend upon it, that Death will open a frightful Scene to them, that will cause them to bethink themselves when it is too late, and to condemn themselves to all Eternity, for not having done it sooner.

N. S.

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Of the Uncertainty of this Life.

Theophilus. OH! How true is the Saying of that holy Man *Job*, that faithful Servant of God, that noble Pattern of an unwearied Patience and Resignation to the Divine Will? *Man that is born of a Woman, is of few Days, and full of Trouble. He cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut down: He fleeth also as a Shadow, and continueth not.* How oft do we all experiment this Truth in others? And how soon may we possibly do it in our selves? It is not Two Days since I saw our Friend *Anchithanes*, as to all Appearance, in perfect Health, and as like to continue so as any one I know; yet now he sends his Servant for me to leave my Business and come to him, because he is very sick, and apprehends himself not like to live. Such is the Frailty of our present State, and the little Reason we all have to promise our selves any long Continuance in it. Job. 14. 1, 2.

This is a very ſudden unexpected Alteration, and a plain Proof of the juſt Cauſe St. *James* had, to compare our Life here to *a Vapour that appeareth for a little Time, and then vaniſheth away.* Who would ever place his Happineſs in a State ſo frail, ſo tranſitory, ſo fickle and inconſtant, were it in all other Reſpects ever ſo deſirable? *We have here no abiding City*, but are liable every Moment to Changes and Viciſſitudes, and inceſſant Approaches towards our latter End. How inſtantly is our Health turned into Sickneſs, our Strength into Weakneſs and numerous Infirmities, our greateſt Joy into the Depth of Sorrow, our Hope into Deſpair, our Plenty into Want, our choiceſt Comforts into Diſappointments, and our Life it ſelf into Death? See how the rich Man in St. *Luke*'s Goſpel delighted himſelf with the Thoughts of a ſure Fund of Pleaſure and Satisfaction, for a long and an eaſy Life. It tranſported him to reflect upon the vaſt Increaſe of his Wealth, the Fruitfulneſs of his Ground, and the plentiful Proviſion it had ſtored him with; ſo that now his chief Care was how to diſpoſe of what he had, that he might command it upon all Occaſions. Which having firſt contrived to do, his next Study would be to ſolace himſelf in the Enjoyment of ſo ſure a Foundation of Happineſs for many Years together, till perhaps worn out with old Age, and a gentle Decay, he ſhould, like the Patriarch *Iſaac*, *give up the Ghoſt and die, and be gathered to his People, being old and full of Days.* For ſo ſays our Saviour, *He thought within himſelf, ſaying, What ſhall I do, becauſe I have no Room where to beſtow my Fruits? And he ſaid, This I will do: I will pull down my Barns, and build greater; and there will I beſtow all my Fruits and my*

St. James 4. 14.

Hebr. 13. 14.

Gen. 35. 29.

St. Luke 12. 17, 18, 19.

Goods. And I will ſay to my Soul, Soul, thou haſt much Goods laid up for many Years; take thine Eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry. A Project the Generality of Mankind would never blame him for! And which there are few that would not be ready to imitate in the like Circumſtances. And yet how ſpeedily, and how miſerably, was he diſappointed? He accounted of Years, *many Years* to live; when alas! poor Man, he had not one Day, nor many Hours remaining. So our Saviour acquaints us in the following Words, wherein we ſee all his Hopes daſh'd at once, with the unwelcome News of his Approaching End. *God* Ver. 20. *ſaid unto him, Thou Fool, this Night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee; then whoſe ſhall thoſe Things be which thou haſt provided?* A moſt aſtoniſhing Stroke! And which muſt inevitably ſtab him like a Dagger to the Heart; that when arriv'd at the Top of his deſired Proſperity and Happineſs, he ſhou'd be immediately caſt down below all his Fears: Oh! How ſad, how diſconſolate, how melancholick, how deſperate muſt his Caſe be? What Meſſage to a worldlyminded Man like this? As if it had been ſaid to him, Thou vain, thoughtleſs Creature, thus to lay thy weak Deſigns *for many Years* to come, and not remember at the ſame Time thou art not ſure of One Hour thou can'ſt call thine own. It is true, thou haſt laid up Goods for many Years, but for whom thou knoweſt not; certainly not for thy ſelf. For *even this Night* thou muſt be call'd away, and ſo muſt leave them to ſome Body, that it may be will neither thank thee for them, nor ſhew any Regard to thy Memory when thou art gone. So vain a Thing is Man! We are apt to form our Projects, and contrive, and drudge and toil

for Futurity; when, for ought we know to the contrary, we are upon the very Brink of the Grave, and ready to drop the next Moment into Eternity:

——*Hæret Lateri lethalis Arundo.*

We carry Death always about us.

Such is the Weakneſs of our Conſtitution, ſuch our natural Decays and Infirmities, ſo many the Diſeaſes we are liable to, and ſuch the Multiplicity and Danger of the outward Accidents we are all expoſed to, that it is a great Vanity and Stupidity to promiſe our ſelves any long Continuance here, nothing in the World being more certain than Death, nor any thing more uncertain than the Time of it. We know not when our Lord will call for us, whether *at Even, or at Midnight, or at the Cock crowing, or in the Morning.* Hence our Life is compar'd in Scripture, to Things of the leaſt Stability or Duration; to a *Ship* under Sail, and an *Eagle* upon the Wing in Purſuit after its Prey; to a *Poſt* that haſteth by; to a Weaver's *Shuttle* that is always in Motion; to a Tale that is ſoon told; and, as I have already obſerved, to a *Vapour that appeareth for a little Time, and then vaniſheth away.* And *Drexelius* juſtly enough ſets it forth by divers ſuch Reſemblances, as plainly intimate it to be of the moſt flitting Nature that can be;

Job. 9. 26. *Ver.* 25. *Job* 7. 6. *Pſal.* 90. 9. *St. James* 4. 14.

*Somnus, Bulla, Vitrum, Glacies, Flos, Fabula, Fœnum, Umbra, Cinis, Punctum, Vox, Sonus, Aura, Nihil.**

Such as a Sleep that is interrupted by any Noiſe, a Bubble that inſtantly diſappears, a

* Prodrom. Ætern. *c.* 1. §. 30.

Glaſs

Glaſs that is broken in a Moment, the Ice that neceſſarily diſſolves upon the Approach of any Heat, a Flower that preſently dries up and falls, a Story that is immediately at an End, the Graſs that is quickly cut down and wither'd into Hay, a Shadow that has no Subſtance of its own, Aſhes blown away by every Puff of Wind, a Point that has no Extenſion, a Voice that is no ſooner heard than gone, or any other Sort of Sound, the Air that is in perpetual Motion; and as if all this were not enough to expreſs its Vanity and Uncertainty, he concludes in reſembling it at leſt to a mere Nothing. And agreeably hereto ſays *Petrarch*, and each ones Experience abundantly confirms his Obſervation,*

Currimus ad Mortem citius vel tardius omnes;

We are all of us haſting to our latter End, and one after another ſhall be ſure to meet with it. It cannot poſſibly be far from any of us;† but may be much nearer to the youngeſt and moſt healthy, than they ſeem to imagine, or are aware of. *One dieth in his full Strength, being wholly at Eaſe and Quiet. His Breaſts are full of Milk, and his Bones are moiſtened with Marrow. And another dieth in the Bitterneſs of his Soul, and never eateth with Pleaſure. They ſhall lie downalike in the Duſt, and the Worms ſhall cover them.* Whence it nearly concerns all that have any Regard for their own eternal Welfare, to be always upon their Watch, according to that Direction of our bleſſed Lord; *Know this, that if the good*

Job 21. 23, 24, 25, 26.

St. Mat. 24 43, 44.

* *De remed. utr. fortun. l.* 1. *Dial.* 6.

† *Mors, que propter incertos Caſus quotidie imminet, propter brevitatem Vitæ nunquam longè poteſt abeſſe.* Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. *l.* 1. *c.* 38.

Man of the Houſe had known in what Watch the Thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have ſuffer'd his Houſe to be broken up. Therefore be ye alſo ready: For in ſuch an Hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh. And that other Admonition in St. *John*'s Revelation, *Behold, I come as a Thief. Bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his Shame.*

Rev. 16. 15.

A ſurpriſing Change indeed! So very lately healthy and ſtrong, and now in a weak and dangerous Condition. Oh the Inſtability of this frail and mortal State! Whom would not this provoke to look about him, and be ſo *wiſe* as ſeriouſly *to conſider his latter End*, that ſo neither Sickneſs nor Death may ever ſeize him unprovided for it? How ought it to baniſh all Vice and Wickedneſs out of the World, and excite People to a conſtant Holineſs of Converſation? And how muſt it raiſe up in the Minds of ſuch, who have any Remainders of Compaſſion in them, a hearty Concern for thoſe they ſee or hear to lie under any ſuch afflictive Viſitation? Eſpecially conſidering they know not how very ſoon it may be their own Caſe, inaſmuch as we have no Certainty of our Lives, nor indeed of our Health, ſo much as for a Day or Hour. Wherefore I have a great Mind to go viſit this good Man, as he deſires; to ſee how he is, and try if I can adminiſter any Comfort to him, and to remind him how he ought both patiently and thankfully to ſubmit to God's Hand, and carefully to prepare himſelf for whatſoever may be deſigned for him; ſo that he may truly glorify God, whether it be by Life, or by Death; and may himſelf be happy in whitherſoever of them. But I wait, though with ſome Impatience,

for

for *Timotheus*'s Company, whom I am obliged to take along with me. He is a very good Man, and *Anchithanes*'s hearty Friend, and wiſhes him as well as any one, and I dare ſay, would rejoice in good Earneſt to do him any friendly Office. For which Reaſons I have already ſent for him, and wonder he ſtays ſo long. But hold, I ſee him coming, and will go meet him. —— Excuſe me good *Timotheus*, that I have taken the Liberty to ſend for you upon an unexpected Occaſion.

Timotheus. I rejoice to ſee you *Theophilus* in good Health, and moſt heartily thank you for all the Civilities and Kindneſſes I have received from you, ever ſince I had the Honour to be known to you, and am glad of any Opportunity of waiting upon you. But may I ask, Sir, why you have ſent for me at this Time? Is there any Thing I can be ſo happy as to ſerve you in?

Theoph. Have you not heard of our Friend *Anchithanes*'s ſudden Illneſs?

Timoth. You ſurpriſe me to a great Degree; Is my good Friend and old Acquaintance *Anchithanes* ſick?

Theoph. He is ſick, very ſick indeed; and by his Meſſage to me, ſeems to apprehend himſelf to be near the Time of his Diſſolution.

Timoth. I am mightily concern'd at it, and muſt own I conceive it to be the worſt News I have heard of a long Time. But as old *Eli* ſaid, upon *Samuel*'s acquainting him with God's Denunciations againſt himſelf and his Houſe, ſo ſay I in this Caſe, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* As every Man is entirely at God's Diſpoſal, ſo ſhould we all be ready at all Times to ſubmit to whatſoever 1 Sam. 3 18.

he ſhall think fit in any Caſe to lay upon us.

Jer. 18. 6. *Theoph.* We are all *in the Lord's Hand, as the Clay in the Hand of the Potter,* to order us as he pleaſes. Let us not therefore be overmuch afflicted for what has befallen our Neighbour, that we ſeem not to ſtrive againſt that Divine Will, which we continually pray *may be done* by our ſelves and all Mankind *in Earth as it is in Heaven,* and go counter to our bleſſed Saviour's Example, who prayed to his Father a little before his Crucifixion, *Oh my Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me; nevertheleſs not as I will, but as thou wilt.* And again, *If this Cup may not paſs from me except I drink it, thy Will be done.*

St Mat. 6. 10.

St. Mat. 26. 39.

Ver. 42, 44.

Timoth. But pray tell me, how long has he been thus ill? I never heard a Word of it before, and am heartily ſorry to hear it now.

Theoph. It is not yet Two Days ſince he was firſt ſeiz'd.

Timoth. It is much he ſhould be ſo quickly weakened to ſuch a Degree, as you ſeem to apprehend.

Theoph. Not at all, conſidering the Mechaniſm of the humane Body, the Variety of its Parts, and the Niceneſs of its Contexture, which like a Clock or Watch of divers Motions, is eaſily put out of Order by every Accident.

Timoth. Will your Occaſions permit you, *Theophilus,* to give him a Viſit.

Theoph. It was for that Purpoſe I ſent to deſire your Company.

Timoth. I am ready to wait on you whenever you pleaſe.

Theoph.

Theoph. Then if you think fit we will be going as fast as we can. You know how truly Christian an Act it is to visit and comfort the Sick and Weak. The wise Son of *Syrach* invites to it, as not only a commendable, but a profitable and advantagious Practice; *Fail not to be with them that weep, and mourn with them that mourn. Be not slow to visit the Sick; for that shall make thee to be belov'd.* And our Christianity teaches us, that it is one of those Duties, which being performed out of Obedience to our Lord's Command, is sure to be rewarded at the last Day with no less an Inheritance, than that of the Kingdom of Heaven. As whosoever pleases may see in that Account our Lord himself gives us of the final Judgment to be passed upon all Mankind. *Then shall the King say to them on his right Hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning of the World.* And the Reason of this his favourable Sentence you have in the Two next Verses, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink;* and amongst other good Deeds, *I was sick, and ye visited me.* Not that this Office was perform'd to our Lord himself in his own Person; but that being done to his poor, sick Members, he will be pleas'd to interpret it, as though it had been done to himself. For so it follows, *Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.* Christ being our Head, graciously reckons all Kindnesses done to any the Meanest of his Members, as done to himself.

To visit the Sick, is a Part of our Christianity.

Ecclus. 7. 34.

St. Mat. 25. 34.

Ver. 35, 36.

Ver. 40.

Timoth. Yes, to his poor Members, such as stand in Need of our Charity and Relief, that we not barely visit them, but make

make ſome Proviſion for the Supply of their Streights.

And even when they are rich.

Theoph. But is this all that you take to be here intended? The Soul, you know, is of infinitely more Value than the Body. And you may be ſure therefore that to comfort, inſtruct, encourage, admoniſh, or any Way aſſiſt a ſick Soul, though of a wealthy Perſon, and who needs no Alms from us, is at leaſt as great a Charity as can be done to the Body.

Timoth. I am convinc'd.

Rom. 12. 15, 16.

Theoph. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* alſo invites to this Sort of Charity, that we not only *rejoice with them that do rejoice*; but *weep* alſo *with them that weep, being of the ſame Mind one towards another*, compaſſionately deſirous of each others Welfare, whether ſpiritual, or temporal, as of our own. Let us go then, and viſit this ſick Man, and adminiſter what Conſolation we can to him, that he be prevailed with to bear this his Sickneſs with the greater Patience and Submiſſion to his heavenly Father's juſt Correction. For in truth this I take to have been his End, in deſiring me to ſend and to intreat your Company. And this therefore I did, that we might together try if we can be any Way ſerviceable to him in his weak Eſtate.

Timoth. I were not only very unkind to him, but unworthy the Name of a Chriſtian, or even of a Man, if I could find in my Heart to refuſe accompanying you, when going upon ſo charitable a Deſign.

And may prove of good Uſe to our ſelves.

* *Eccleſ.* 7. 2.

Theoph. Let us haſten then. **It is better*, ſays the Preacher, *to go to the Houſe of Mourning, than to the Houſe of Feaſting, for that is the End of all Men, and the Living will lay it to heart.* What better Motive can there be to a true Repentance

Repentance for all our Sins, and a ſerious and affecting Conſideration of what is like to become of us in a future State, than to obſerve a ſick Friend, ſtruggling with the Pangs of Death, and ready to expire at every Gaſp? It is not only a Kindneſs to our Friends to viſit and attend them in theſe Agonies, and afford them the beſt Aſſiſtance we are able in any Reſpect, but may prove a greater to our ſelves, by reminding us of our Mortality, and the dreadful State of ſuch as are forced to leave this World, before they have prepared themſelves for a better. Let us therefore loſe no Time. And God grant we may find him well in his Underſtanding, that however he be otherwiſe affected, his Head and Intellectuals be not diſturbed.

Timoth. And that his Sickneſs be not ſo violent, as to unqualify him for ſuch Diſcourſe as is proper for one in ſo declining a Condition.

The Firſt VISIT.

The more remote Preparation for Death.

Theophilus. I Am glad to find you alive, good *Anchithanes.* I made haſte to ſee you as ſoon as ever *Timotheus* came, but by your Servant's Relation I was not without ſome Suſpicion of coming too late. *The ſick Man's preſent State.*

Timotheus. *Theophilus* affrighted me with his Account of the Danger wherein you was repreſented to be: But I am heartily glad to find it not ſo bad as we imagined.

Anchi-

Anchithanes. My good Friends, I unfeignedly thank you, both for your kind Visit to a poor sick Man, and for your compassionate Concern for my Welfare.

Theoph. We should be extreamly to blame, if we should not be highly concerned for the Life of so dear a Friend, and so singularly useful upon all Accounts. But pray, good *Anchithanes*, How do you find your self?

Anchith. I was exceedingly ill, troubled with fainting Fits, in which I thought I should have died away before I could hope to see you: But I thank God they are now over; and though I doubt I have got a Feaver, it is not yet so violent but that I am quite another Creature than I was a few Hours since.

Timoth. God be praised for that.

Theoph. It is a great Blessing that you have met with such an Abatement of your Distemper: But it is a far greater, that you have not your main Work now to do, but have been long expecting the Time when you must come to languish upon a sick Bed, and getting your Soul into a Readiness for it.

The Happiness of not having our great Work to do, when we come to languish upon a sick Bed.

Anchith. If I had not, I must have been in a most disconsolate Condition at this Time. For to die, and enter upon an eternal State, is a serious Matter, and of the utmost Importance that can be. And to prepare aright for it, is a Work of Time and Pains, in which we can never be too diligently employed. And yet on the other Hand I find my Head so out of Order, my Spirits so faint and low, and my Thoughts so fluctuating and discomposed, that I am in a Manner fit for nothing; but by no Means

fit

fit to go through with ſo great a Work, as an Entrance upon a new Courſe of Life would be.

Theoph. I am ſenſible that a ſick Man has enough to take up his Thoughts, upon the Account of the Uneaſineſs of his Condition, and need not therefore to have deferred any Work of Moment till that Time.

Timoth. It once affected me very nearly, to hear a good Man loaded with Years, and of a very infirm and broken Conſtitution, though not then labouring under any preſent Sickneſs, entreat his Auditors from the Pulpit to believe, what he found by certain Experience, that old Age and a crazy Body were very ill Qualifications for the Performance of any Matter of Conſequence and Difficulty, and particularly for the great Work of Repentance: And I could eaſily believe him; and did heartily wiſh, that both my ſelf, and all then preſent, would be invited ſpeedily to apply our ſelves to it, as being firmly perſwaded, it would both deſerve and require all our Strength and Vigour, and our moſt ſerious and undiſturbed Thoughts, to bring ſo great a Change about.

Theoph. The Caſe is ſo very plain, that one would think it hardly poſſible for any Man of common Underſtanding to put off his Repentance a Day longer. And yet daily Experience ſadly ſhews, that nothing is more common with the Generality, even of them who call themſelves Chriſtians, and profeſs to have their *Converſation in Heaven*, and to be *laying up their Treaſures* there, than to live as if they had no Hope of a future State.

Timoth.

Timoth. They go on in the Crowd, and think to fare as well as their Neighbours: And becauſe they ſee their Companions, and all about them, heedleſly follow their own Imaginations, and though they own a Neceſſity of Repenting ſome Time or other, are yet loth to ſet about it; they therefore take the ſame deſtructive Courſe, in Hope that when they come to languiſh upon a ſick Bed, and are fit for nothing elſe, they ſhall have Time enough to do that, which all their Life long they could never be prevailed with to ſet about, though it ought to have been the Buſineſs of their whole Lives. Till perhaps they are taken away by ſudden Death, and ſo never lie ſick at all; or if they do, their Sickneſs proves ſuch, as either employs all their Thoughts with the Acuteneſs of its Pains, or the Intenſeneſs of its Heat and Thirſt, or their Heads are ſo diſturbed, that they rove and wander, and are fit for nothing that is ſerious; but eſpecially, not for taking a Review of their paſt Converſation, and making a Judgment of themſelves from it. And thus all their good Purpoſes prove abortive, and ſerve to no other End, but to delude and deceive them here, and render them everlaſtingly miſerable hereafter.

Anchith. This is a very melancholick Conſideration; but the Fact is too evident to be denied.

Timoth. Now you find the Comfort of not having been one of this inconſiderate Tribe, but having taken Care in Time to do, what now it would be out of your Power to do as you ought.

Anchith. I would not have been one of them for all the World. I ever admired the Folly of ſuch as could find in their Hearts to venture their eternal State upon the Uncertainty of a late Repentance, which too probably might never be at all, or at leaſt never be ſuch as to reſtore them to the Favour of God, and an Intereſt in his Promiſes of Mercy and Salvation.

Theoph. You have ever acted as a wiſe Man, but never ſo truly in any Reſpect as in this; all the Concerns of this preſent World being nothing in Compariſon of the ineſtimable Felicity of that which is to come, nor any Sort of Tortures that can befal us here, bearing any Proportion to thoſe everlaſting Burnings, whereto the Reprobate will be adjudged in a future State.

Anchith. I confeſs and deſire to do it with Shame and true Compunction of Soul, that I have been a great Sinner; though, I thank my God, I have made it my Study throughout the whole Courſe of my Life, to forſake my Sins, and live in the Practice of the contrary Virtues, relying upon God through Chriſt, for the Pardon of my Sins, and Ability to reform and amend. Yet not ſo exactly buſy after all the Care I have hitherto taken, I find I have Buſineſs enough now upon my Hand, in triming up my Lamp, and fitting my ſelf for my Lord's Appearance, that I may be accepted by him at his Coming. Whererefore,

A Con-

A Confession of Sin.

I.

O *Most holy, most glorious, and most gracious Lord God, who desirest not the Death of a Sinner, but that he should turn from his Ways and live, cast an Eye of Pity and Compassion upon thine unworthy Servant, Estrange not thy self from me by reason of my Undutifulness. I confess, O Lord, with the utmost Shame and Self-abasement, that I have highly offended thy divine Majesty, and forfeited all Pretence to thy Favour. It is of thy Mercy that I am not long since consumed, that thou hast not cut me off, and cast me into the Furnace of Fire, where is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth for evermore. Wherefore I desire to humble my self before thee in the most submissive Manner, to lament and be heartily sorry for my Sins. I have sinned against infinite Love, and the most endearing Expressions of Kindness, against the clearest Revelations of thy holy Word, and the most powerful Arguments for engaging to a better Obedience, and have repeated my Transgressions from Day to Day, and from Year to Year. And now, Lord, what can I expect but that thine Indignation should be kindled against me, and thou shouldst swear in thy Wrath that I shall never enter into thy Rest? This miserable State I have brought my self into; as I cannot otherwise reflect than with Bitterness and Anguish of Soul. It cuts me to the Heart, to think I should have thus grosly abused thy Goodness, and disobey'd thy Laws. And in a just Sense of this my inexcusable Folly and Baseness, I now apply my self to thee by a hearty Repentance; in hope that thou wilt not cast me off when I do so, but will extend thy Kindness to me, as thou usest to do those*

that fear thy Name, through thy only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Prayer for Pardon of Sin.

II.

O H! Blessed God, I beseech thee, deal not with me according to mine own Weaknesses and Imperfections, my Neglects and Omissions, my Heedlesness and Inadvertency, much less according to my more heinous, my wilful and deliberate, my fouler and more abominable, my open, my repeated, my habitual Offences; but after the Multitude of thy Mercies blot out all mine Iniquities. Think upon me, O Lord, for thy Goodness; and for thy great Name's sake, and thy dear Son's sake, be reconciled to me, as if I had never sinned against thee. If thou should'st consider me as I am in my self, I could hope for nothing but Misery and Destruction: Even the best of my Services are polluted and defective, and stand in great Need of thy Mercy and Forgiveness. And my wilful and more dreadful Provocations call loudly for thine Indignation upon me. And what shall I say unto thee, O thou Preserver of Men? My own Heart condemns me; my Misdoings testify against me; and thou who knowest them all much better than my self, together with their several Aggravations, mightest justly condemn me. But my Comfort is, that with thee the Lord there is Mercy, that thou may'st be feared, and with thy Son is plenteous Redemption. For his Sake forgive me all my past Transgressions, whether in Thought, Word, or Deed; those I remember, and those I have forgotten; such as my Conscience sadly accuses me of, and such as have escaped my Notice; my Sins against thee my God, against my Neigh-

bour, and againſt my ſelf; pardon them all without Exception of any one amongſt them, that they may neither be charged upon me to my Shame and Confuſion here in this World, nor to my everlaſting Ruin in that which is to come. I have undone my ſelf; but in thee is my help; and to thee therefore do I flee for Succour. Reject me not, O Lord, in my Diſtreſs, nor ſhut up thy Bowels of Compaſſion from me. But own me for thy Son by Adoption and Grace, and ſave me from thy Vengeance due to my manifold Provocations: Whatſoever I have done that I ought not to have done, or whereinſoever I have violated thy moſt holy Laws, waſh it all away, I moſt humbly beſeech thee, with my Saviour's Blood. And look upon me as a returning Prodigal, who am ſincerely Penitent for all my Miſcarriages, the Follies of my Childhood, the Extravagancies of my Youth, and the Slips and Errors, together with all the other Iniquities of my riper Years. And ſpare me O Lord, ſpare me, and of thy great Goodneſs command Deliverance for me. Deal not with me according to my Sins, nor reward me after mine Iniquities; but lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon me. Call to mind thy Loving-kindneſſes, which have been ever of old, and viſit me with thy Salvation. Thou knoweſt my Frame, and that I am but Duſt; and may it therefore pleaſe thee to extend thy Pity to me, and receive me again into thy Favour. Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, who am vile Earth, and a miſerable Sinner; but ſo turn thine Anger from me, who meekly acknowledge my Vileneſs, and truly repent me of my Faults, and ſo make haſt to help me in this World, as that I may never be condemn'd with the Wicked in the World to come, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

Another

Another for Improvement in Goodneſs, and a right Preparation for a happy Death.

III.

HEAL my Soul, for I have ſinned againſt thee. And if it ſhall be thy good Pleaſure to prolong my Days here upon Earth, grant I may improve the Time thou ſhalt allow me, to thy Glory, and my own everlaſting Welfare, by ſerving thee faithfully, and doing Good in my Generation: Or if thou haſt determined to remove me hence, ſo cleanſe and purify my Heart, that I may neither be aſhamed to have lived, nor afraid to die; but may leave this World in a full Aſſurance of thy Favour, and may be for ever happy with thee in thy heavenly Kingdom, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

Timoth. I hope God will hear your devout Addreſſes to him, and will grant you a happy Diſſolution in his due Time; but whether by Means of this preſent Sickneſs, I will not pretend to gueſs, though I wiſh for my own and others ſake that he may not. *Epaphroditus was ſick, indeed he was ſick nigh unto Death,* yet ſays St. *Paul, God had Mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have Sorrow upon Sorrow.* And it is to be hop'd that God may be pleas'd to reſtore you too, to the Comfort of your Friends, and the great Benefit of your Relations and Dependants. Phil. 2. 26, 27.

Anchith. His Will be done. I deſire entirely to reſign my ſelf to his Diſpoſal, whether for Life or Death, truſting through the Me-

rits of my bleſſed Redeemer, that either of them ſhall be for my Good, according as he ſhall in his infinite Wiſdom decree. And if Death be to ſeize me, as I expect, whether it ſhall be a painful, or an eaſy, a lingring, or a ſpeedy Death, I chearfully ſubmit to his Determination. His Will is the beſt, and wiſeſt Will; and for this Reaſon I deſire it always may be mine too.

The Happineſs of being always prepared for Death.

Theoph. Happy you that have brought your ſelf to ſuch a holy Frame and Temper of Mind! And may the Almighty vouchſafe to beſtow his choiceſt Bleſſings upon you; temporal and ſpiritual Bleſſings, if it ſhall ſeem pleaſing to him in this World; but however he diſpoſe of you here, everlaſting Bleſſings in that which is to come. And now *Timotheus*, let you and I learn from this noble Example before us, to obſerve and lay ſeriouſly to Heart the Bleſſedneſs of having taken Care in Time to provide for Eternity. There is no Delight and Satisfaction upon a Sick-bed, comparable to that of being able to ſay with King *Hezekiah*, *I beſeech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy Sight*; or with St. *Paul*, *I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſh'd my Courſe, I have kept the Faith: Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which God the Righteous Judge will give me at that Day, and not to me only, but to all that love his appearing.* It is a ſingular Happineſs to reflect upon a Life paſt, and ſee that it has been ſpent to God's Glory, and the main Deſign of our coming into this World; and that the good Man has nothing more to do, when he finds his End drawing on, but to take an eaſy Leave of his wonted Enjoy-

2 Kings 20. 3.

2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

ments

ments and Friends, in order to a welcome Tranſlation into a heavenly Paradiſe, where ſhall be no more Sighing, or Sorrows, or Grief, or Fear, or Pain, or Sickneſs, or Death, but all ſhall be moſt charmingly Tranſporting, without the leaſt Mixture of any Allay, and this to all Eternity.

Timoth. The different Ends of the Righteous and the Wicked in this Reſpect, are a powerful Motive to a timely Repentance, though we were to carry our Proſpect no farther. But when hereto are added the infinitely glorious Rewards promiſed to the one, and the intolerable and everlaſting Tortures and Agonies that are threaten'd to the other, he muſt be beſides himſelf that can be content to live in ſuch a Manner, as that without a Miracle of Mercy, he muſt be irrecoverably miſerable for evermore.

Anchith. It is very ſtrange, * that People can allow themſelves in a State of ſuch apparent Danger, and of ſuch dreadful Conſequence! And yet nothing is more common, the Hope of a future Repentance being perhaps the moſt ſucceſsful, of all the Stratagems the grand Enemy of Mankind has ever yet invented, in order to their Deſtruction. Moſt Men are deſirous to enjoy their Vices here, and Heaven hereafter. And having no other Way to reconcile theſe Two Sorts of Deſires, but by a late Repentance, the Bait takes readily with them, and they ſwallow it without conſidering what a terrible Risk they run by

* *Non eſt, crede mihi, ſapientis dicere, Vivam.*
Sera nimis vita eſt craſtina, vive hodiè.
Martial. l. 1. Epigr. 16.

it, and how intolerable a Miſchief it will be, if they ſhould either have no Time for ſuch a Repentance, or having Time, ſhould be any Way either incapacitated for, or diverted from heartily ſetting about it, or when they have endeavoured it, ſhould find a ſhort imperfect Repentance, after ſo long a Courſe of Sin, not available to the End they deſigned by it.

The great Danger of delaying our Repentance.

Theoph. All Delays of this Kind are of a dangerous Nature, and ſeldom fail to end in the future Ruin of the Delayer. For it is great Odds, * that he who is unwilling to repent to Day, will be as unwilling to Morrow, or whenſoever he hopes to ſet about it. The ſame Cauſes of Delay will ſtill remain; and he will find the ſame Obſtacles in his Way hereafter, that he does at preſent. And Love of his Sins, and whatever prevents his Repenting now, will not be leſſened, but increaſed and ſtrengthened, by a longer Continuance in a wicked Courſe of Life. For Cuſtom, we all know, has a ſtrange Influence, and becomes a Kind of ſecond Nature, and breeds an almoſt invincible Inclination to whatever we have long addicted our ſelves to, whether in natural Actions, or Moral. And in Truth, the longer any one defers his Repentance, the leſs likely he is ever to undertake it with Succeſs, becauſe thoſe Habits which he is neceſſarily to diveſt himſelf of before he can have performed it, do every Day take deeper and deeper Root, and ſo are more difficultly

* *Sed propera; nec te venturæ differ in horas;*
Qui non eſt hodiè, cras minus aptus erit.
Ovid. De remed. Amoris, l. 1.

plucked

plucked up. Sin is like a bodily Sickneſs, which is oftentimes rendered incurable, by having gain'd too great a Head, before a Courſe was attempted for its Cure. And hence it neceſſarily follows, that the longer it is continued in, the more powerful it muſt be; and ſo muſt require a greater Strength, and firmer Purpoſes and Reſolutions in order to a Conqueſt over it. And yet, alas! he that has deferred his Repentance to the laſt, if he ſhall then in good Earneſt ſet about it, will not only find himſelf under the Power of a more inveterate Habit, and a ſtronger Biaſs on the wrong Side, but which is far more conſiderable, he has alſo leſs Ground to expect the Aſſiſtance of God's holy Spirit, without which he will never be able to perform any Thing that is Good. For though it is certain, that Almighty God delights not *in the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he turn from his Way and live*, though he *would have all Men come to him, and be ſaved, and is long ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance*; he has ſaid no leſs on the other Hand, that his *Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man*, and has threatned that as *to him that hath ſhall be given*, that is to him that uſeth aright the Grace and Aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit, ſhall be given a greater Meaſure of the ſame Grace and Aſſiſtance, *and he ſhall have more abundance*; ſo on the contrary, *whoſoever hath not*, that is, makes not a right Uſe of it, *from him ſhall be taken away, even that he hath.* As much as to ſay, God of his great Goodneſs will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask it, and ſtudy to make a good Improvement of what Meaſure of it he beſtows upon them, but will withdraw it from ſuch as abuſe his Kindneſs, ei-

Ezek. 33. 11. 1 *Tim.* 2. 4. 2 St. *Pet.* 3. 9. *Gen.* 6. 3. St. *Mat.* 13. 12.

ther not using his Grace at all, or to a wrong Purpose. And when a Sinner has provok'd God thus to leave him to himself, he sadly deceives his own Soul, if he imagine himself likely to effect in a little Time, what he thought too difficult to be entered upon, when his Strength was greater, his Time more, his sinful Habits not so settled and confirmed, and his Assistance greater than he can now hope for. So that there is very little Reason to expect such an one should ever repent truly at the last, if he have Time for it. He that is affrighted at the less burthensome Task, will hardly venture upon the greater to any Purpose. And if he could not be induced to amend when his Sins were much fewer, and his Abilities for conquering them much greater, he can scarce hope to do it as he ought, when his Vices have taken deeper Root, and his Spirits are exhausted, and his Help is gone. This I say * upon Supposition of his having Time allow'd him for this great and necessary Work. But if it happen on the contrary, as it very often does, that he has no Time for it, how deplorable must his Case then be? He is undone beyond Recovery; and nothing remains for him, but *a fearful Expectation of Wrath and fiery Indignation* from Almighty God. And yet every one knows this is a common Case, and which frequently befals such as put off their Repentance till hereafter. † Death seizes them, as it did the rich Man, whom we cannot too often think of, whose Soul was de-

* Μίμνησο ἐκ ποῦ πάντα ἀναβαλῆ, ἢ ὑπολείπεσθαι λαβὼν παρὰ τῶν θεῶν, ἢ καὶ σύ. Antonin. in fin. l. 2. n. 1.

† *Emendationi tuæ indulgentiam promisit Deus, sed tuæ dilationi diem crastinum non promisit.* Drexel. Horolog. p. 51.

manded

manded of him at a Time, when he thought of nothing leſs, *than he did*, according to a ſcandalous Proverb too well known amongſt our ſelves, *of his dying Day*. *His Ground*, ſays our Saviour, *brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himſelf, ſaying, What ſhall I do, becauſe I have no Room where to beſtow my Fruits? And he ſaid, This will I do; I will pull down my Barns, and build greater; and there will I beſtow all my Fruits, and my Goods. And I will ſay to my Soul, Soul, thou haſt much Goods laid up for many Years; take thine Eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry.* Thus he vainly promiſed himſelf a long Enjoyment of what he was ſo pleaſingly poſſeſſed of. But ſee his unhappy and ſpeedy Diſappointment; his Project for many Years was hardly framed, when behold a moſt diſagreable Meſſage is ſent him, enough to ſtrike him dumb, and fill his Mind with the utmoſt Confuſion. *God ſaid unto him, Thou Fool, this Night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee; then whoſe ſhall thoſe Things be which thou haſt provided?* They ſhall have another Owner; and poſſibly one whom thou didſt by no Means deſign them for. *So is he*, ſays our Saviour, *that layeth up to himſelf Treaſure* upon Earth, *and is not rich towards God.* And ſo is it ordinarily with him that promiſes a late Repentance, and will not be induced to ſet about it in the mean Time. Such too uſually experiment, to their Coſt, the Uncertainty of their fruitleſs Expectation; being one Way or other, before they are aware of it, deprived of the Seaſon they had groundleſly promiſed themſelves to repent in. To the ſame Purpoſe alſo ſpeaks St. *James*, taxing ſome in his Days, with contriving Buſineſs for a much longer Time, than they had any Reaſon to depend upon. *Go to now*, ſays the Apoſtle, *ye that ſay,*

St. Luke 12. 16, 17, 18, 19.

Ver. 20.

Ver. 21.

St. James 4. 13, 14.

To

To Day, or to Morrow, we will go into ſuch a City, and continue there a Year, and buy and ſell, and get Gain; whereas ye know not what ſhall be on the Morrow. For what is your Life? It is even a Vapour, that appeareth for a little Time, and then vaniſheth away. Our Life is ſo ſhort and uncertain, *that nothing is more common than for Men to be cut off in the midſt of their Days, and ſo to have *all their Thoughts periſh*, all their likelieſt Projects and beſt laid Deſigns miſcarry, and all their Hopes defeated. When once
Pſal. 146. 4. *their Breath goeth forth*, and how ſoon that may be God alone knows, *they turn again to their Duſt*, and all their Expectations, their Contrivances and Imaginations vaniſh into Air. And theſe Two Conſiderations, that he who purpoſes to repent hereafter, may poſſibly never live to ſee the Time he promiſes to do it in; or if he do, the ſame Impediments that obſtruct his Repentance now, will in all Probability not be leſſen'd, but increas'd, and ſo more like to obſtruct it ſtill: Theſe Conſiderations, I ſay, were an abundant Caution to a wiſe Man to undertake it out of Hand, whilſt he is fit for it, and has Time to do it in, and good Reaſon to believe, that by God's Grace he may perform it, in ſuch a Manner as to be accepted by Almighty God, and ſo it may prove *a Repentance to Salvation, and that is never to be repented of.*

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* *Quid ſit futurum cras fuge quærere,*
Quem ſors dierum cunq; dabit, lucro
Appone. Horat. Od. 9.

Moriendum enim certè eſt, & id incertum, an eo ipſo die.
Senec. de Senect. c. 20.

Timoth. These are weighty Considerations, and deserve to be well attended to, by all that know they have immortal Souls to save, and which must be infinitely either happy or miserable in the other State, according to the Provision they shall have made for themselves, by the Discharge or Neglect of their Duty here.

Theoph. They are so, as weighty as can be. And yet there are others nor inferior to them, and which deserve a serious Regard, as well as they.

Timoth. These are enough highly to condemn the Behaviour of such who act in Contradiction to them, at the Hazard of their eternal Welfare. But since you have others yet in reserve, be pleas'd to let us hear them, though I should have thought these sufficient of themselves.

Theoph. The Two Chief are these: First, that he who repents at his latter End, loses the Comfort of his Repentance, and departs hence at great Uncertainties. His Repentance may possibly be such as would hold out at all Times, and under all Trials; but this is more than he can assure himself of. He knows he resolves well; but so have many who are now in Hell, bewailing their Folly and Disobedience, in endless and remediless Torments. Their Resolutions were made, when their Spirits were low, the Temptations to their Sins were weak, and when the Prospect of a near Eternity was before them to awaken their Minds, and put them upon reflecting what was like to become of them for ever, if they should die in their Sins. Hence they fully resolved to lead a new Life, if it should please God to prolong their Days; and that they would never suffer themselves to gratify their unreasonable Lusts and Passions

A Death-bed Repentance is comfortless.

Paſſions any more, but would always keep in Mind the great Account they muſt one Day give up before your Lord's Tribunal, and would make ſuch diligent Preparation for it, as that Death may never ſeem terrible to them any more. Yet when it had pleaſed God to try them, and they found themſelves again in Health and Vigour, their Vices aſſaulting them with the ſame Inſinuations as formerly, and Death and Hell appearing again at ſome Diſtance from them; the Deceitfulneſs of Sin has prevail'd againſt them, their good Purpoſes have flagged, their Vows and Promiſes have been forgotten, their Allurements have appear'd with their uſual Force, their ſinful Companions have entic'd them, their own wicked Hearts have betray'd them, their grand Enemy the Devil has taken Care to ſtrengthen and enflame all their evil Motions and Inclinations, and they have ſhamefully and perfidiouſly relaps'd into their former Abominations, and have again indulg'd themſelves in all they had ſo formally renounced, *returning with the Dog to his Vomit; and with the Sow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the Mire.* Or perhaps *the unclean Spirit that went out of the Man, returning, and finding his Habitation empty, ſwept, and garniſh'd, may have taken to him Seven other Spirits more wicked than himſelf, and theſe all entering in, and dwelling there, his laſt Eſtate* may have become *far worſe than the firſt.* Nothing is eaſier than to deſign and promiſe an Amendment, when a Man is under a violent Fear and Danger, which has taken ſuch Poſſeſſion of his Mind, that he is not at Liberty to conſider the Difficulty of performing the Amendment he thus haſtily promiſes. His Thoughts are all employed about the Neceſſity he is in, of endeavouring by all Means poſſible, to a-

2 St. Pet. 2. 22.

St. Mat. 12. 43, 44, 45.

void

void the diſmal Pit, that opens its inſatiable Mouth to receive him. And this prevents his duly attending to the Means that are needful to this great End, and the Inconveniencies and Trouble that may probably be met with in the Uſe of them. So that all his good Reſolutions being made only when in ſuch a Fright, and when his Eyes were ſo fixed upon the Want he had of them, that he could not allow himſelf to make a due Enquiry into the ſeveral Conflicts whereto they might expoſe him, no Wonder if they hold out no longer, when his Circumſtances are quite alter'd, and his wonted Habits preſs him, and all his uſual Temptations return upon him with a far greater Strength than he had imagin'd. This is ſuch a terrible Diſappointment to him, that he knows not how to bear up againſt it, but faints and falters, and falls away, in hope of another Repentance when in the like unhappy State. Inſtances of theſe Relapſes have been ſo notorious, that the Death-bed Penitent will never be able to aſſure himſelf, he ſhall not be liable to the ſame Hazard, if it pleaſe God to make the Experiment. And therefore, not knowing whether all his Sorrow for his Sins, and his Purpoſes and Promiſes of a new Obedience for the Future, are ſuch as will ſtand the Teſt, and upon Trial will *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*, he muſt needs be in great Perplexity, and full of Doubts and Fears, leſt after all he has been able to do in this weak Condition, towards the ſecuring his eternal Salvation, he ſhould however miſcarry, and *come ſhort of the Glory of God*, and have his Portion at laſt allotted him amongſt the *Veſſels of Wrath*, that are *fitted for Deſtruction*. Theſe Apprehenſions muſt inevitably ſit heavy upon the Soul of one that is ſo late affected with a Sight and Senſe of his Sins,

Sins, and the dreadful Tortures due to them, and who moreover knows not whether all his Sorrow, and Humiliation, and Repentance be ſuch, as would certainly produce a Reformation in him, if Time were allow'd for it. And yet neither is this the worſt of his Caſe, tho' bad enough in all Reaſon. For,

And not ſo certainly available to Salvation.

Secondly, Did he know his Repentance to be ſuch, as upon Trial would anſwer his Expectation, of producing in him quite different Affections and Actions from what he had before indulged himſelf in, he is not ſo very ſure that it will be available to Salvation, unleſs it actually do ſo. *When the wicked Man turns away from his Wickedneſs which he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right,* we know aſſuredly *he ſhall ſave his Soul alive.* But I have never met with a like Promiſe to him that has lived wickedly all his Life, and only laments and condemns his Folly, and promiſes an Amendment when he comes to die. God may, and I charitably hope he will, extend his Pity to many ſuch as are truly convinc'd, though at the laſt Gaſp, of the Evil of their Doings, and unfeignedly reſolve upon a Reformation, ſo far as he ſhall enable them for it. But I am not now ſpeaking of what God may do, but what he has told us he will do, and what we may certainly depend upon. And to ſpeak my Mind freely and plainly, I do not know of any Certainty of Salvation promiſed in Scripture, to ſuch whoſe Righteouſneſs conſiſts only in a fruitleſs Reſolution, that could never be reduc'd to Practice. It is unqueſtionable that no Man, in his Health, has any Warrant to paſs a Judgment upon himſelf, by what he may be, or intends to be hereafter, but by what he has been, and is at preſent. And I could

Ezek. 18. 27.

could never find that God has preſcrib'd one Sort of Laws for thoſe in Health, and another of a very different Sort for ſuch as languiſh upon a Sick-bed. More may be demanded of the One than of the Other, becauſe of his Ability to do more; but it will be hard to ſhew, that whoever deſires to be ſaved is not indiſpenſably required to *eſchew Evil, and do Good; to keep the Commandments; to do Righteouſneſs; to put off concerning the former Converſation, the old Man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful Luſts, and to be renewed in the Spirit of the Mind, and put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs*; and in a Word, *to cleanſe himſelf from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, and perfect Holineſs in the Fear of God.* And this is ſomething more than barely reſolving to do well hereafter, if it be in our Power. A true Repentance is not only Μετάνοια, a Change of the Mind, or a Sorrow for having done amiſs; but Μεταμέλεια too, a Care to walk more holily for the future. And where this latter Part of it is wanting, there is too much Reaſon to fear, that the other will not be ſufficient without it. At leaſt it is not ſo certain that it will, as that any who call themſelves Chriſtians, ſhould venture their everlaſting Salvation upon it, leſt at the laſt they meet with a dreadful Diſappointment, and when they have been pleaſing themſelves with the Hopes of Heaven, and all its unconceivable Happineſs, ſhould awake to their eternal Sorrow, in the never ending Flames of Hell. I do not pretend to ſet Bounds to the Divine Goodneſs, and pardoning Mercy, or to determine juſt how far the Almighty will extend his Favour to a relenting Sinner, who repents in the very Agonies of Death. It is enough for

Iſ. 1. 16, 17. and 1 St. Pet. 3. 11. St. Mat. 19. 17. 1 St. Joh. 3. 7. Epheſ. 4. 22. 2 Cor. 7. 1.

for my Purpoſe, and a great deal more than our modern *Clinicks* can anſwer, that I know of no expreſs poſitive Declaration in Scripture, that ſuch ſhall be ſaved.

The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard conſider'd.

Timoth. But hold, *Theophilus*, you ſeem to run a little too faſt. For pray what do you think of our Saviour's Parable of the Labourers hired into the Vineyard, St. *Mat.* 20. 1, *&c.* according to which thoſe who came in at the laſt Hour, met with the ſame Welcome and Reward with them that had *born the Heat and Burden of the Day*? Is it not natural to infer from hence, that if a Man turn from his Sins, though ever ſo late, he may reaſonably expect to be accepted as a true Penitent?

Theoph. By no Means; as might eaſily be ſhewn upon divers Accounts. For this Parable was ſpoken upon another Occaſion, and without any Relation to the Death-bed Penitent, no more being intended by it, than the Calling of the Gentiles into the Church of God. And the ſeveral Hours mention'd in it were deſign'd not to ſignify the ſeveral Parts or Stages of our Lives, but the different Ages of the World; and that the Gentiles, who were taken into the Lord's Vineyard, and made Members of his Church in thoſe latter Days, ſhould nevertheleſs enjoy equal Privileges, and be put in the ſame State of Salvation with the *Jews*, who had been God's ancient People, his *Segullah*, his choſen Inheritance, and were called earlier by many Generations. Which being the genuine and proper Interpretation of the Parable, as deſigned only to ſilence the Clamours of the *Jews*, againſt the Admiſſion of the reſt of the World to the ſame Benefits with themſelves, every one muſt perceive at firſt Sight, that the Death-bed Penitent can

hope for no manner of Advantage by it. For if rightly underſtood, it is perfectly foreign to his Caſe, and leaves him juſt in the ſame Condition, as if not one Word of it had ever been ſpoken. And yet if we ſhould allow him to apply it to himſelf, to gather what Encouragement he can from it, as one that is ſinking is apt to lay hold upon every Twig, it will ſtand him however in no ſtead. For *Firſt*, what theſe Men could plead for themſelves was, *that no Man had hired them.* They were not called before, and ſo had this Excuſe for themſelves, for their not coming in ſooner. Which makes a vaſt Difference betwixt their Caſe, and his who has been called, invited, encouraged, threatened, and had all Means uſed to reclaim him from his Sins, had *Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, and yet obſtinately perſiſted in his Diſobedience to the laſt, and then hopes to make his Peace, and obtain the Pardon of his Sins, by a few dying Groans, and faint Wiſhes, and Purpoſes of Amendment. Such an one cannot plead for himſelf, that none had offer'd to hire him; but on the contrary, his own Conſcience will fly in his Face, and ſeverely condemn him, for having ſo long withſtood ſuch effectual Means of Grace and Salvation, as had been afforded him; if he could but have been prevailed with to make a good Uſe of them. Beſides, *Secondly*, theſe Men were *Labourers*, and though they had wrought but one Hour, and ſo but a little while in Compariſon of thoſe who enter'd in firſt; yet ſome Pains they had taken. They had faithfully anſwer'd their Obligation, by working from the Time they were taken into the Vineyard; which was all their Lord expected from them. Is. 28. 10.

They came in, it is true, but at the Eleventh Hour, because they were not hir'd sooner; but then they did the Work of that Hour, according to their Covenant. Whereas he that comes not in till the Twelfth Hour, has no Time to Work; and were he ever so willing to do it, has yet no Reason to promise himself any Wages for doing nothing. He may be concern'd that he was not employ'd amongst the rest; but this gives him no Title to the Reward, which was intended for, and promis'd only to such as did the Work. Again, *Lastly*, they claim'd no more than was due to them by Compact. For so says the Householder, *Ver.* 7. *Go ye also into the Vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive*; as much as to say, they should be sure to have their Wages amongst the rest. But has the Death-bed Penitent any such Promise made to him? If he has, let him produce it. For my Part I have already told you, I can find none made to any, but such who turn from their evil Ways, time enough to do some *Works meet for Repentance.* Nor could St. *Austin* long ago, who tells us, * *If he that lies at the Point of Death prays to be admitted to Repentance, I cannot refuse to comply with him herein. But yet I must confess, if he die with such a Reconciliation, I dare not be over-confident of his dying in a good Condition: Tho' he may think himself secure, and die with this Persuasion, I dare not be secure that he is so. I can receive him to Pennance, but cannot tell him what the Effect of it will be.* And a little after, *Do I say he shall be damned? I do not say it. Do I say then that he shall be saved? Not that neither.*

* B. Aug. Hom. 41.

What

What Answer then can I give? Only this, that I do not know. I presume nothing, I promise nothing; and the Reason is, because I know nothing. Whereupon he subjoins this seasonable Advice; *Would you free your self from all Doubt? Be sure to repent whilst you are in Health. For if you do thus, and when Death appears, if you moreover obtain Absolution, you have just Ground of Security. For you repented at a Time when you had it in your Power to sin. Whereas if you delay your Repentance, till you can sin no longer, it is not you that leave your Sins, but your Sins leave you.* Thus dubious was this eminent Father, concerning the future State of such as had defer'd their Repentance to their last Hour, even though they should then set themselves to make the best Amends in their Power. And before him St. *Cyprian* deliver'd it as his Opinion: "*That such should not be admitted to the Hope of Communion, and the Peace of the Church, who did not heartily repent and bewail their Offences till they were sick, and in Danger of Death; because it was to be presum'd it was not a real Sorrow for their Sin, but the Terror of their approaching End, that produc'd this Submission; and it is not fit that he should receive Comfort when he comes to die, who would not be perswaded to think of Death, before it came to seize him.*" These were Two great Men in their Generations; and who have been had in universal Honour and Esteem ever since. Yet I do not quote their Words purely for their Sakes, but because of the Reason and Strength of Argument that is in them; it being impossible for him to prove the Validity and Efficacy of his Repentance, how hearty

* B. Cypr. *Ep.* 55. *Edit. Oxon.*

ſoever, who does not ſet about it in his Health and Strength, and while it is in his Power to gratify his worldly and carnal Inclinations, if he will.

Timoth. What you have ſaid ſeems to argue a greater Danger, as to the Invalidity of a late Repentance, than I had really apprehended. For though I was ſenſible, how little Reaſon there is to expect, that ſuch ſhould heartily repent upon their Sick-bed, who had refus'd to do it in their Health and Strength, I made no Queſtion but thoſe, who did then all they could, that is to ſay, who were truly ſorry for their Sins, and fully reſolv'd to reform and amend, and to lead a new Life, if it ſhould pleaſe God to reſtore them to their Health; I made no Queſtion I ſay, but theſe had been in a ſafe Condition. But you have very much ſhaken my Confidence in this Point; and I begin now to think, that tho' I had always a very ill Opinion of deferring Repentance to the laſt, there is yet far more Danger in ſuch Delay, than I was aware of.

Theoph. The more ſeriouſly and impartially you conſider with your ſelf, the more diffident I am apt to think you will be, as to the Efficacy of ſuch a Repentance.

The Caſe of the Thief upon the Croſs conſider'd.

Timoth. I do not know but I may. But pray *Theophilus*, what do you ſay to the other Inſtance, of the Thief upon the Croſs, to whom our Saviour promis'd at his laſt Hour, that he ſhould be *that Day in Paradiſe*? St. *Luke* 23. 43. This was a very late Repentance, as late as could be, and yet it proved very ſucceſsful, and our Saviour declares himſelf ſatisfied with it.

Anchith. I have been liſtening carefully to you all this while, *Theophilus*, and do readily concur with you in all you have ſaid upon this important Subject; and am clearly of your Judgment, that no wiſe Man will dare to defer his Repentance, though it be but for one Day. But yet this Inſtance ſeems to lie in your Way; and the clearing it well, would tend very much to the confirming all you have thus ſtrenuouſly diſcours'd.

Theoph. That is eaſily done. But I fear I have already overtir'd you with this long Harangue; eſpecially ſince though it be upon a weighty Subject, and the Conſideration whereof is very fit and proper for the Generality of Mankind, to prepare them beforehand for the State you are now in; yet it is not ſo fit all our Time ſhould be ſpent in what is no more to the Purpoſe of our preſent Meeting. And indeed I have been ſeveral Times ready to condemn my ſelf, for having enter'd upon an Argument ſo foreign to the Buſineſs we came about; which was to diſcourſe with you, who both are ſick at preſent, and have repented beforehand, and whom it is therefore unreaſonable to weary with a long Deſcription of what is incumbent upon others, who are in quite different Circumſtances, and are ſtill obliged to the Performance of that Duty, which you have been performing all your Life long. You are one of thoſe who, according to our Saviour, *need no Repentance*, that is, as it implies in it an Entrance upon a new Courſe of Life. And therefore it is not fit to trouble you with any more, of what has already been too burthenſome to you. St. Luke 15. 7.

Anchith. I confeſs I have lain ſtill without interrupting you; but I aſſure you it was not without lending all the Attention I could, to ſo excellent and uſeful a Diſcourſe. And I muſt needs ſay, that you have entertain'd me to my great Satisfaction. And I am ſo far from being uneaſy at what you have argued with ſo much Perſpicuity and Strength of Reaſon, that I heartily join in the ſame Requeſt, that you will proceed to ſatisfy *Timotheus*, concerning the Thief upon the Croſs, and the happy Succeſs of his late Repentance.

Theoph. Then with your leave, *Anchithanes*, I proceed. And *Firſt*, I remark that a ſpecial Regard is to be had to the Time when his Repentance was thus rewarded, ſuch a Time as can never happen again whilſt the World laſts. For it was at the Time of our bleſſed Saviour's Death, when the Redeemer of the World was lift upon the Croſs, for the Atonement of our Sins, and our Deliverance from the heavy Indignation due to them. And what Wonder were it, if at ſuch a Time as this he ſhould glorify himſelf, by a ſingular Act of Compaſſion, and even a Miracle of Mercy, ſuch as that never was any afterwards to expect the like? When our Lord was thus ſtupendouſly expoſing himſelf for the Sake of Mankind, if he did in a peculiar and extraordinary Manner ſhew Kindneſs to a poor penitent Sinner, that addreſſed to him *in Articulo Mortis*, it will not follow that he muſt do the ſame to all that fly to him in very different Circumſtances. He that is ſo infinite in Mercy, might very well ſhew an uncommon Inſtance of it, upon ſo ſignal an Occaſion, without making it a ſtanding Rule for others. If a ge-

a general Pardon at a Prince's coming to his Throne will not infer, that no Criminals are to be punish'd by him thenceforward through all his Reign, no more will what was done at this Time evince, that the same Method is to be taken, and the same Allowances to be made through all succeeding Generations. It well became so solemn a Time as this was, to leave some illustrious Monument of an unusual Condescention, for the Comfort and Encouragement of such as should come after. But they grosly abuse such inestimable Loving-kindness, who take occasion from hence to harden themselves in their Wickedness, as if they were all entitled to the like Commiseration when they come to die, though ever so heavy laden, and so shamefully defiled with, and enslaved to their Sins. *Secondly*, this Thief owned our Saviour in such a Manner, as argued in him a very strong and operative Faith, inasmuch as otherwise he would not have dared to profess his Belief in him, when he saw him conflicting with such an Excess of Shame and Pain. The hard Usage our Lord then labour'd under was enough to affright any one not throughly perswaded of his Divinity, to have denied him as St. *Peter* did, rather than expose himself to all the Obloquy, and Reproach, and Pain, and Torture, that might be expected to accompany such a Profession. Yet did not all this discourage this unfeigned Proselyte and Penitent, from venturing the utmost, that could be added to the Condemnation he was now suffering under: He gave the fullest Testimony that could be of his Faith in Christ, by a free and undaunted owning of him in the Face of his Persecutors; and when his Disgrace and Sufferings were

ſuch as had terrified his own Diſciples, and put them upon forſaking and denying him. Ὁ δὲ λῃςὴς, &c. ſays St. *Chryſoſtom*, * *The Thief, without having heard the Prophets, or ſeen any Miracles to convince him, beholding our Saviour faſtened upon the Croſs, attended not to his Diſgrace, nor regarded his Diſhonour, but looking to his Divinity, brake forth into this Petition; Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom.* *Thirdly*, We know not what Sort of Life he had led, nor how he had behav'd himſelf as to the Main of his Converſation. That he had been guilty of an Act of Robbery, is implied in the Character given of him, the Sentence of Condemnation paſs'd upon him, and his own Acknowledgment, for himſelf and his Fellow-Sufferer, *that they received only the due Reward of their Deeds*, St. Luke 23. 41. But whether he had made a common Practice of it, or had ever liv'd in any other Courſe of known Wickedneſs, we are not told; nor what Steps he might poſſibly have made towards Repentance, during his Confinement. Whence it manifeſtly follows, that our Saviour's Procedure towards him, can be no Precedent for others to judge by, whoſe Sins are too notorious, and bear too flagrant Teſtimony againſt them, as no way Worthy of the Lenity and Clemency they are ſo ready to depend upon. *Fourthly*, It does not appear that this Penitent had ever before heard of our Saviour and the Laws of his Goſpel, and ſo poſſibly he ſurrender'd himſelf upon the very firſt Call; which makes ſo wide a Diſtance between his Caſe and that of the Death-bed Penitent, as may

* Ἐις Γεν. Λογ. 3.

juſtly

juſtly ſilence the Pretences of all ſuch to an Acceptance with our Lord, at the laſt Gaſp, from this Example, ſo very different from any Thing they have to plead for themſelves. And then it is moſt certain, *in the laſt Place*, that this is but a ſingle Inſtance; all Ages from the Beginning of the World to this Day not affording another like it. And it is very unreaſonable to conclude, that becauſe our Lord was once thus wonderfully merciful, therefore he will be ſure to be ſo, as often as a Sinner is unwilling to repent of his Sins, whilſt he can continue in them. This is a ſtrange and a ſhameful Preſumption upon God's Goodneſs, and which the late Penitent may juſtly expect will leave him at beſt in a very diſconſolate and dangerous Condition. I do not ſay that God will not pardon ſuch as, after a long Courſe of Wickedneſs, unfeignedly turn to him at the Hour of Death. But yet from what I have now ſaid, I preſume I may fairly conclude, he has given us no Aſſurance that he will do it, and in particular, that nothing of this Nature can be reaſonably inferr'd from this Inſtance of the Thief upon the Croſs.

Timoth. I heartily thank you, good *Theophilus*, for the full and ſatisfactory Account you have given of this Inſtance, ſo often abuſed, to the hardening Perſons in their Sins, in hope of a ſpeedy Admiſſion into Heaven, when they can keep them no longer. And methinks if your Doctrine were ſufficiently publiſh'd to the World, People would not dare to venture on ſo heedleſly in their Impieties; which they now perſwade themſelves will be eaſily pardon'd, upon a ſlight Repentance when they come to die.

Theoph.

Theoph. This is the very Height of Indiscretion, or rather of Folly and Madness. And no one in his Wits can possibly give a Reason for acting thus unaccountably, nor would ever allow himself in it, did not his Lusts and Passions cloud his Judgment, and utterly unqualify him for consulting his own Safety: For if he that neglects to repent at present, knows not whether he shall have another Day to do it in, or if he have, will yet have the same Impediments to struggle with, and so be tempted to defer it to another Time, and thence to another, and so it may be never repent at all: And again, suppose Death should fright him into Repentance when he is just going out of the World; if he can never be sure his Repentance is such as would produce a real Reformation in him, if Time had been allow'd him, nor that it will be available to Salvation, unless it actually do produce such a Reformation; and if moreover his Two main supports of the Labourers in the Vineyard, and the Thief upon the Cross, both fail him, he has all the Reason in the World, to look upon himself as in the ready Way to everlasting Ruin, and must be a most desperate Enemy to his own Soul, if he resolve still to persist in it.

Anchith. This is so necessary a Consequence of the foregoing Doctrine, that I earnestly wish all would be constantly mindful of it, and would diligently improve it to their own Advantage. I am sure those must leave themselves without all Excuse, who do not. Nor is there any greater Folly in the World than the Deferring of Repentance, unless it be what too frequently follows upon this, the not doing it at all.

Timoth.

Timoth. Beſides, it is to be conſider'd, that each Day any one defers his Repentance, he continues in his Sin, and ſo is yet adding to his Account, and treaſuring up to himſelf new Matter of Grief, and Sorrow, and Shame, and Remorſe, and Anguiſh, againſt his intended Time of Repentance. And what a monſtrous Abſurdity is it, for a Man knowingly and wilfully to do, what he is convinc'd beforehand muſt prove Bitterneſs in the End; and if it do not conſign him over to eternal Miſery, as there is too juſt Reaſon to ſuſpect it will, muſt however overwhelm his Soul with Confuſion and Terror, and be a Vexation abundantly beyond all the Pleaſure he could ever hope for from it?

Theoph. Upon the whole it is plain beyond all Doubt, that it is every Chriſtian's chief Intereſt and Concern, immediately and in good Earneſt to ſet upon this weighty and neceſſary Work, if he has hitherto neglected it; and upon the Perfecting it, and rendring it as compleat as may be, if he has it not now to begin. And I muſt therefore beg Leave to recommend that excellent Advice of the wiſe Son of *Syrach*, as well deſerving every ones ſerious Attention and Practice. *Return unto the Lord, and forſake thy Sins; make thy Prayer before his Face, and offend leſs. Turn again to the moſt High, and turn away from Iniquity; For he will lead thee out of Darkneſs into the Light of Health; and hate thou Abomination vehemently. Before Judgment examine thy ſelf, and in the Day of Viſitation thou ſhalt find Mercy. Humble thy ſelf before thou be ſick: And in thy Time of Sins ſhew Repentance. Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy Vows in due Time, and defer not until Death to be juſtified. Think upon the Wrath that ſhall be at* Eccluſ. 17. 25, 26. Chap. 18. 20, 21, 22, Ver. 24.

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the End; and the Time of Vengeance, when he ſhall turn away his Face.

Anchith. And this good Uſe I beg of God, that I may be able to make of it. I thank God I have not the Buſineſs of my whole Life now upon my Hands; yet I cannot but pray moſt fervently, *That God will grant me his Grace to carry me through my laſt Conflict with that Patience and Reſignation, and will fortify my good Purpoſes with ſuch Courage and Reſolution; and grant me ſuch Power over all my Sins, as that I may retain no Manner of Inclination to them, but may be always improving in Virtue and Goodneſs for the little Time I have to ſtay here, and whenſoever I ſhall be taken hence, may be ſet above the Reach of all Temptations, and continually employ'd in ſounding forth Hallelujahs to the King of Heaven, to him who was, and is, and is to come, and to Jeſus Chriſt the faithful Witneſs, the Firſt Begotten from the Dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth; who hath loved us, and waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Prieſts unto God and his Father; to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever.* Amen.

A Prayer

A Prayer for Strength againſt Temptations, and Improvemen in Virtue and Goodneſs.

O *My God, be thou merciful unto me, and help my poor Endeavours to pleaſe thee. I am earneſtly deſirous to approve my ſelf unto thee. But alas! the Corruption of my Nature, and the Weakneſs of my Faculties are ſuch, that the beſt of my Performances are all polluted and defiled. And to my unſpeakable Grief I find, that when to will is preſent with me, yet how to perform that which is Good, I know not. Such is the wretched State wherein I am at preſent; and ſhouldſt thou leave me to my ſelf, I could never hope for an Amendment. But O Lord, be merciful unto me, and aſſiſt me with thy Spirit, which alone can carry me ſucceſsfully thro' the great Work I am engag'd in. Do thou but ſpeak the Word, and thy Servant ſhall be healed. I am a poor, feeble, impotent Creature, utterly unable of my ſelf to do what thou requireſt of me. But if thou once beſtow thy Grace upon me, that alone will be ſufficient to carry me on againſt all Oppoſition, whether from Men or Devils, or from mine own ſinful and vicious Inclinations. Deny me not that Aſſiſtance which thou ſeeſt needful for me, to enable me to do thy Will; and which to that End I moſt humbly beg of thee. Let thy Strength be made viſible in my Weakneſs. And whenever thou ſeeſt me like to fall by whatſoever Sort of Temptation, do thou ſtretch forth thy Almighty Hand, and keep me up. Let nothing ever prevail againſt me, and draw me aſide from that Duty thou requireſt of me. But grant I may ſet thee the Lord always before my Face, that in nothing I may Sin againſt thee; that I may eſchew Evil and do Good; may work out my*

Salvation

Salvation with Fear and Trembling, and give the utmoſt Diligence for making my Calling and Election ſure, before I ſhall go hence and be no more ſeen; may be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, foraſmuch as I know that my Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord; and may be progreſſive in Goodneſs, and continually advance from one Degree of Grace to another, till Grace ſhall at laſt be conſummated in everlaſting Glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

Theoph. I pray God to hear your Prayer, and that he will give each of us Grace, not only to depart from all Iniquity, but *to perfect Holineſs in his Fear.* There is an excellent *Meditation* to this Purpoſe, that I lately met with in a certain devout Author, that might ſeem well worthy of your Attention, but for the Length of it; which I doubt you cannot diſpenſe with at preſent.

Anchith. Yes, very well; and pray let us have it: For I am deſirous to hear any Thing that tends to promote ſo good a Deſign.

La Mort des Juſtes. Par Monſieur La Placette, *l.* 2. *c.* 4.

Theoph. He repreſents a Penitent Sinner bemoaning his own Folly, and declaring how exceedingly miſerable he muſt have been, had it not been for the great Goodneſs and Clemency of Almighty God towards him. "There is not a Moment paſſed, ſays he, "from my coming into the World to this "Time, wherein I might have not died. Many "Cauſes, ſome of which I know, though "others I do not, might eaſily have wrought "this Effect upon me. This is a certain and "undoubted Truth. And yet how very few of "theſe many Moments have there been, "wherein I could have died without being

"utterly

"utterly loſt? For, alas! How incapable "have I been of dying the Death of the "Righteous? How have I wanted that Re- "pentance, that Faith, that Charity, and "thoſe other Virtues, without which it is not "poſſible for me not to be the Object of the "Divine Wrath, whether in Life or Death? "A great Part of my Time has been ſpent in "a ſenſeleſs Negligence. And oftentimes I "have fallen into groſs Sins, and have not "preſently applied my ſelf to God for the "Pardon of them; or if I have ſought to "to him for Pardon, it has been coldly and "indifferently, without the Sorrow and Fer- "vency which are neceſſarily required in or- "der it. And when I take a Review of the "moſt conſiderable Stages of my Life paſt, "how little of it does there appear, of which "I can ſay that it has not been ſullied with "ſome habitual Sin? If from the reſt of my "Life all that be taken away, wherein my "Mind had entertain'd any Reſentment, or "Hatred, or Quarrel againſt any of my Bre- "thren, or wherein I have unjuſtly detain'd "what of Right belong'd to him, or have "been under the Power of a ſinful Affection "for this World's Goods; and have been rea- "dy to ſacrifice my Salvation and my Con- "ſcience to them, by known and deliberate "Sins, how very ſmall will the Remainder "be? And had I died in ſuch an Eſtate, how "deplorable a Caſe muſt I have now been in? "I had undoubtedly been now in Hell, ſuffer- "ing the ſame Tortures with thoſe the Di- "vine Juſtice has condemn'd to that doleful "Place of Puniſhment. How am I then in- "debted to the immenſe Goodneſs of my "Creator, for preſerving me from what

"might

" might ſo eaſily and naturally have befallen
" me? A Favour that has not been granted
" to divers others that I had known, and then
" whom I had not better deſerv'd it at his
" Hand; whom I have ſeen taken hence ei-
" ther by Sickneſs, or ſuch unforeſeen Acci-
" dents as I have been ſuffer'd to eſcape. And
" can I ever ſet too high a Value upon ſuch
" abundant Clemency and Compaſſion? Yet
" to what Purpoſe does all this Kindneſs
" ſerve, if it do not put me upon a conſtant
" Care never to run the ſame Danger, where-
" to I have hitherto been expos'd. As I might
" poſſibly have died in any Moment of my
" Life paſt, ſo may I, for ought I know to
" the contrary, at this preſent Inſtant, or at
" any Time yet to come. There is no one
" Minute of my Life that may not be that
" of my Maſter's coming. And can I then
" forbear always to behave my ſelf ſo, as that
" whenſoever he ſhall appear, he may find me
" watching, and in a Readineſs for his Re-
" ception? How am I concern'd, either to
" procure a Peace and Reconciliation with
" God, or at leaſt to get my ſelf aſſured upon
" good Ground that I am already in that
" bleſſed State, and moreover to guard my
" ſelf with the utmoſt Diligence againſt what-
" ever might endanger the Loſs of ſo ineſti-
" mable an Advantage? In a Word, How
" am I oblig'd to renounce all Sort of Wick-
" edneſs, to caſt off the Love of the Crea-
" tures, and give my ſelf intirely up to God,
" and make it my only Study to pleaſe and
" ſerve him? The only Difficulty I obſerve
" in reſolving this, is from the Power theſe
" outward good Things have got over me,
" and my Averſeneſs to the Thoughts of part-

" ing with them, together with the vain and
" falſe Hope I have of making the Intereſt of
" Earth and Heaven conſiſt together, either
" by allowing the preſent Seaſon to the for-
" mer, and Futurity to the Second, or by
" taking Pains by Turns, ſometimes for the
" one, and ſometimes for the other. But can
" I ſtupidly ſuffer my ſelf to be drawn aſide
" by ſuch groſs Deluſions? Can I, in the
" firſt Place, weigh the Intereſt of this Life,
" againſt thoſe of the Life to come? How
" hard muſt I wink, before I can let the Deſire
" of gaining Earth make me venture the Loſs
" of Heaven, and to enjoy a little the more
" Pleaſure during the few Moments that re-
" main of my Life here, dare to be miſerable
" through the vaſt Extent of a boundleſs Eter-
" nity? On the other Side, if I wholly em-
" ploy my preſent Time in purſuit of the
" Things of this World, what Aſſurance can
" I have of an Opportunity hereafter, where-
" in to ſecure an Intereſt in Heaven? If the
" future Seaſon I promiſe my ſelf ſhould ne-
" ver come, but Death ſhould ſnatch me a-
" way in the mean Time, what Profit ſhall I
" have of all the Trouble I had been at in
" ſeeking after theſe temporal Advantages?
" In ſhort, how can I ever believe that the
" little Time I have to live, and which yet is
" always upon the Wing, will laſt long e-
" nough both to ſettle me upon Earth, and
" to open Heaven-Gates for me? In truth it
" will ſcarce ſuffice for the accompliſhing ei-
" ther of the Two Deſigns. And to attempt
" both at the ſame Time, is the ready Way to
" ſucceed in neither. Wherefore ſuppoſing
" me once convinc'd in my Mind, of what in
" reality I know not how to queſtion, name-

" ly, that nothing is of so great Concern to
" me as my Salvation, that this is the chief
" and most considerable Interest I ever had,
" or can have; it is indeed my only Interest,
" before which whatever else I aim at va-
" nishes into nothing, and may in no wise
" be compar'd with it, can I possibly think
" my self at liberty to run the Hazard of so
" inestimable a Prize, rather than employ all
" the Powers I have, and all the Time my
" Lord affords me, in the Prosecution of it?
" See here then my grand and most impor-
" tant Affair! See here the only lawful
" Object of my most unwearied Endeavours!
" To this it is I am to apply my utmost Force;
" and I shall have Reason to think my self
" happy beyond Measure, if I can but at last
" attain to it. But how do I talk of Force
" and Ability, who find, to my Sorrow, how
" exceeding impotent and weak I am; and
" how incapable I find my self of discharging
" the smallest Matters as I ought, and that
" I cannot of my self conceive a good Thought,
" so far am I from performing a truly good
" Action? This Reflection, O my God, would
" cast me into Despair, if I did not know that
" thy *Grace is sufficient for me.* I can do no-
" thing without thy Assistance, but thou canst
" enable me to do all Things. Thou canst
" strengthen and support me, and perfect in
" me what I should in vain attempt without
" thy Help. Yet this is not all. For thou
" hast not only Power enough to supply my
" Impotence, but Goodness enough too, not
" to disdain to display it, in favour of such as
" utterly distrusting themselves, place their
" whole Affiance in thee alone.

A Praye

A Prayer for Heavenly-mindedneſs and Purity of Heart.

"*THIS* [Truſt in thee] *is my only Refuge, O my God: It is this alone that preſerves me from being totally diſcourag'd. I hope that thou wilt afford me ſuch Succours as thou ſeeſt neceſſary for me, and which I beg of thee from the Bottom of my Heart. Defer not, O good God, to help me till the latter End of my Life, but grant me, from this very Hour, to be ſenſible of the ſaving Efficacy of thy good Spirit. Root out of me that unhappy Inclination I have to the Earth and its deceitful Allurements. And grant I may breath only after heavenly Things, or to ſpeak more properly, after Thee alone, who art the only Treaſure whereby I can become rich indeed. Give me Grace to love thee in the firſt Place, and above all Things, to conſecrate all the Motions of my Heart to thee, a Heart that having been made for none but thee, cannot ſtoop, without leſſening it ſelf, to any inferior Objects. Seize this Heart, O God, for thy ſelf, and refuſe not to place thy Throne in it, and ſubject all its Inclinations to thy ſelf, that nothing may ever ariſe in it that is not according to thy Will, and tends not to promote thy Glory. In one Word, O Lord, diſpoſe all Things in ſuch a Manner, as that I may live in thy Fear, and die in thy Favour and Love.* Amen."

Timoth. Thus ought every good Chriſtian to pray. But *Theophilus*, I ſhould ſtill have a farther Requeſt to you, were it not for fear of being over-troubleſome to *Anchithanes*, whom I think we ought to take Pity upon, and leave

him to himſelf, and to his Reſt, after ſo long an Exerciſe of his Patience. For though your Diſcourſe is admirably entertaining and inſtructive; it may be too much for one whoſe Spirits are low, and his Body diſorder'd, and who may need therefore to be quiet.

Theoph. I wiſh what I have ſaid had come up to the Dignity of the Subject I have been treating of, than which nothing can be of more univerſal Concern to Mankind. But pray what is it you would have asked farther?

The Nature of a true and ſaving Repentance.

Timoth. That you would have declared wherein conſiſts the Nature of that Repentance for which you have been thus ſtrenuouſly arguing, that ſo a Man may know, not only what Obligation he is under to the faithful Diſcharge of it, but likewiſe how he may diſcharge it aright.

Theoph. Your Motion I confeſs were very proper, were it not unſeaſonable at preſent. For we muſt have a Care not to treſpaſs too far upon *Anchithanes*, who, though he is very obliging, and will not complain of us, muſt needs wiſh within himſelf that we would be going: Therefore we had better forbear at preſent, and appoint another Day to meet and ſettle that Enquiry.

Anchith. Pray, dear *Theophilus*, let me by no Means occaſion any Interruption of your Diſcourſe, for I thank God I am not ſo ill as you may imagine. I am, and have been very eaſy, and though ſomewhat faint, yet not to ſuch a Degree, but that I have been moſt agreeably entertain'd by you hitherto; and could be very glad to hear *Timotheus*'s Queſtion well anſwer'd, that ſo I may pick out ſomething for my own Uſe.

Theoph. This will be too large a Task to enter upon at preſent, and I muſt therefore entreat that you will pleaſe to diſmiſs us at this Time.

Anchith. I know not how to do that, I am ſo deſirous of your Deciſion of that weighty Point, that you can no Way ſo far oblige me, as by granting *Timotheus* his proper and ſeaſonable Requeſt.

Theoph. Since you have given your Word, *Anchithanes*, that this Undertaking is not diſagreeable to you at this Time; I ſhall make no farther Excuſes, but ſet my ſelf to diſpatch what you deſire, though with all the Brevity I can. Now the firſt Thing implied in this great Duty of Repentance, is a Sight of Sin and Sorrow for it, as for the worſt of all Evils, and indeed the Cauſe of all others, highly offenſive to Almighty God, and infinitely deſtructive of our own Welfare, both now in this World, and Irrecoverably to all Eternity in the other. It is a notorious Diſobedience and Affront to our Sovereign Lord and Creator, whoſe we are, and to whom all our Services are due, and whoſe Laws we cannot violate without the vileſt Diſingenuity and Undutifulneſs. He gave us our Being, and preſerves us in it, and all the good Things we at any Time partake of, proceed purely from his Bounty to us. *In him we live, and move, and have our Being*; and to him we are accountable for all our Doings, and for our good or ill Management of the divers Talents and Bleſſings he intruſts us with. And what can be more intolerably misbecoming, than to riſe up in Rebellion againſt ſuch a gracious Benefactor, to return him Indignities and Deſpite for all his Munificence and Bounty, En-

mity for his Love, and *Hatred for his good Will*? And is not the having done this enough to make a Man abhor himſelf in Duſt and Aſhes? How ſhould it cover our Faces with Confuſion, and fill our Hearts with the moſt pungent Sorrow, to think that we ſhould ever have indulged our ſelves in a Courſe of ſuch Undutifulneſs to the beſt of Lords, ſuch intolerable Diſobedience to the kindeſt and moſt loving of Benefactors, on whom is all our Dependance, and all our Hope? If we conſider our ſelves only as Creatures made and protected by him, and who have all the Reaſon in the World to ſubmit to his Government, every wilful and deliberate Offence againſt him muſt be highly provoking. And the Remembrance of every ſuch Tranſgreſſion ought to ſtick hard upon us, and make us reſtleſs and impatient, till we ſhall have obtain'd the Pardon of it. But then if we farther obſerve that our good and gracious God has not only taken Care of our Bodies, to accommodate us with the good Things of this Life, but has much more gloriouſly manifeſted his exceſſive Loving-kindneſs towards us in the Care he has condeſcended to take for the Welfare of our immortal Souls; that he not only enter'd into Covenant with Man to make him abundantly happy upon Condition of a dutiful Obedience to his Laws; but when all Mankind *had ſinned, and ſo come ſhort of the Glory of God*, and had juſtly deſerv'd the Severity of his Indignation, to ſuffer for their Wickedneſs both in this World, and in that which is to come, he out of his immenſe Goodneſs commiſerated our loſt undone Condition, and *found out a Ranſom for us*, when no Hope of Reſcue any other Way appear'd or could be imagin'd, by giving his

own Son, his only-begotten, and well-beloved Son, the ever-bleſſed *Jeſus*, to aſſume our Nature, and be born into the World, to lead a mean and troubleſome Life, to be *deſpiſed and rejected of Men*, flouted, and derided, and at laſt put to Death upon the Croſs for our Redemption; that *as in* our firſt Parent *Adam all had died, ſo in him* the ſecond *Adam all might be made alive.* Whoſoever, I ſay, obſerves this aſtoniſhing Manifeſtation of the Divine Goodneſs towards rebellious and ſinful Man, may well ſtand amaz'd to think that they ſhould ever find in their Hearts to diſobey a God of ſuch abundant, ſuch exceſſive Pity toward us. This is the utmoſt Height of Ingratitude, as well as Diſobedience, and can never be ſufficiently lamented by all the Tears we can ſhed, and Sighs and Groans we can ſend forth. Though we ſhould *go mourning all the Day long*; with *David*, though we ſhould *make our Bed to ſwim, and water our Couch with our Tears*; with *Hezekiah*, though we ſhould *chatter like a Crane or a Swallow, and mourn as a Dove, till our Eyes ſhould fail with looking upwards*; with *Daniel*, ſhould *ſet our Face unto the Lord God to ſeek by Prayer and Supplications, with Faſting, and Sackcloth, and Aſhes*; and with the Penitents in the ancient Church, *ſhould *put on Sackcloth, and cover our ſelves with Aſhes, and caſt our ſelves down in the Midſt of the Congregation; ſhould puniſh our ſelves with Faſting, and Wailing, and all Sorts of Mortification, ſhould fall down to the Faithful, and embrace their Knees, and kiſs their Feet, and ſeek by all Means poſſible to obtain their Prayers in our Behalf*; ſhould we do all this,

1 Cor. 15. 22.

Pſal. 6. 6.

Iſ 38. 14.

Dan. 9. 3.

* Tertull. de Pœnit. c. 9. & de Pudic. c. 5. B. Cyprian. Epiſt. 65. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 5. c. 28.

and a Thouſand Times more by Way of Penance for our Abuſe of ſo good, ſo gracious a Redeemer, we could never duly bewail the Heinouſneſs of ſuch Iniquity. So that if we conſider only the Wickedneſs of our Sins, and the horrid Guilt contracted by them, we have all abundant Cauſe to lament and bemoan them, and to ſhew forth the greateſt Abhorrence and Deteſtation of them. And yet have we ſtill more Reaſon to do it, if hereto be added the miſchievous Effects of them in relation to our ſelves, as they are the only Means of robbing us of God's Favour, and expoſing us to his juſt Indignation, and thereby of bringing down his heavy Judgments upon us here in this World, and of delivering us over to his eternal Vengeance in the other, to be ſentenced *from his Preſence and the Glory of his Power*, and be *caſt into outer Darkneſs*, where will be *Weeping and Wailing, and Gnaſhing of Teeth* for evermore, *and have our Part in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone; which is the ſecond Death*, and the ſharpeſt and moſt intolerable, as well as the moſt laſting of all Puniſhments. Wherefore ſuch being the Guilt, and the terrible Fruits of our Sins, every one that is not wilfully Blind muſt neceſſarily ſee what indiſpenſable Obligation all are under, to abominate and deteſt them, and loath themſelves becauſe of them, and earneſtly ſue to the Throne of Grace for Mercy and Forgiveneſs, and Ability to walk more holily for the future. This is the firſt Part of Repentance, a hearty Sorrow for Sin, and an Abhorrence of it, and of our ſelves becauſe of it. The next is a firm and ſteady Purpoſe of forſaking it. And nothing is more natural, than to reſolve to flee from, and avoid what we know to be

be not only bad in it ſelf, but deſtructive alſo to all that indulge themſelves in it. They whoſe Hearts are harden'd, and their Eyes ſo blinded as not to ſee the Evil of Sin, may ſenſeleſly chooſe to live in it. But all others muſt be ſelf-condemn'd if they do not unfeignedly reſolve upon a ſpeedy Renunciation of it, and take care moreover to put ſuch their Reſolution in practice. To this common Prudence and a deſire of our Welfare directs, as we would not ruin our ſelves beyond Recovery. The Checks of our own Conſciences alſo recommend it, reprehending us for what we have done amiſs, and reminding us how much it is our Duty to live in the Exerciſe of the contrary Virtues. And this the holy Scriptures from Time to Time inculcate with the greateſt Earneſtneſs, and under the ſevereſt Penalties; requiring *to deny all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent World*; to *ceaſe to do Evil, and learn to do well*; to *repent and be converted, that our Sins may be blotted out*; to *caſt off the Works of Darkneſs, and put on the Armour of Light*; and, in a Word, to *repent and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance*. And in truth, without this, all our Sorrow for our Sins, and the Sight and Senſe we have of them, inſtead of atoning, will aggravate our Guilt, and increaſe our Condemnation, and will entitle us to the dreadful Fate of that obſtinately diſobedient Servant, who knows his Maſter's Will, but for not doing it, as he is convinc'd he ought, *ſhall be beaten with many Stripes*. The clearer Apprehenſion any have of their Sins, the more deplorable is their Condition, and the greater Share of Torments they muſt expect in the other Life, if they ſtill continue in them.

Tit. 2. 12.

Iſ. 1. 16, 17. Acts. 3. 19. Rom. 13. 12. Acts 26. 20.

St. Luke 12. 47.

them. And this therefore is the other Part of our Repentance, that to our Sight of our Sins and Sorrow and Humiliation becauſe of them, we add alſo a ſubſequent Care to refrain from them, and walk in all Reſpects as becomes good Chriſtians. Without this, our Repentance, how penſive and affecting ſoever, is nevertheleſs incompleat, and will never ſtand us in any ſtead.

Timoth. You have been like your ſelf *Theophilus*, very kind and obliging, in giving your ſelf thus much Trouble at my Entreaty. And which is an unequal Return for it, you have hereby embolden'd me to pray a farther Favour from you; which is, that you would in like Manner inform me how a Reſolution of Amendment is to be form'd, ſo as that it may hold out in Time of Temptation, and may really produce the Amendment intended by it.

How to form an effectual Reſolution of Amendment.

Theoph. This is a very pertinent Enquiry, and which deſerves the ſerious Conſideration of all that would repent to Purpoſe; ſo as not to deceive themſelves with *a Name to live, whilſt they are dead*, and uſeleſs as to the proper Purpoſes of Living; and therefore I ſhall make no Difficulty of giving you the cleareſt Anſwer I can to it. It is certain too many reſolve with themſelves to amend and live well, whoſe Reſolutions ſtand them in no Stead, becauſe not founded upon a ſound Bottom; either not made from a right Principle, or not duly conſider'd, together with the Temptations that may ariſe to the contrary, whereby they are preſently ſhaken, and ſo they become *like the Morning-Cloud, and like the early Dew that goeth away.* For the Cure of which Miſchief, we muſt ſee that our Reſolutions be fix'd and

and well ſettled, that they be our deliberate Choice, and what we are fully bent upon adhering faithfully to, whatever the Conſequence be as to this Life. They muſt be like that of *Joſhua*, who had ſet his Heart to ſerve the Lord, and had his Mind ſo fix'd upon it, that he would conſtantly cleave to him, tho' none elſe ſhould. For thus he beſpeaks the Children of *Iſrael*, like a faithful Servant of the true God, and who was zealouſly deſirous that all ſhould ſet themſelves to ſerve him aright; but would do it himſelf, though he ſhould have none but his own Family to join with him in it. *Now therefore fear the Lord, and ſerve him in Sincerity and in Truth, and put away the Gods which your Fathers ſerv'd on the other Side of the Flood, and in Egypt, and ſerve ye the Lord. And if it ſeem Evil unto you to ſerve the Lord, chooſe you this Day whom you will ſerve; whether the Gods which your Fathers ſerv'd, that were on the other Side of the Flood, or the Gods of the Amorites, in whoſe Land ye dwell: But as for me and my Houſe, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.* Or like that of *Job*, *Till I die I will not remove my Integrity from me. My Righteouſneſs I will hold faſt, and will not let it go; my Heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live.* And again to the ſame Purpoſe, *I will not offend any more, that which I ſee not teach thou me; and if I have done Iniquity, I will do no more.* Where you ſee he reſolutely declares againſt all known Sin, *I will not offend any more*; and if he had miſcarried through Ignorance, and done what he ought not, he deſires to be better inſtructed, with a Promiſe never to offend again in the like Manner. *That which I ſee not, teach thou*

Joſh. 24. 14, 15.

Job. 27. 5, 6.

Chap. 34. 31, 32.

me; and if I have done Iniquity, I will do no more. Thus muſt every Penitent ſtedfaſtly and poſitive

ſitively

ſitively fix his Reſolution of ſerving God ſincerely and uprightly, without a Reſerve for any beloved Vice, or any Trouble or Difficulty, Loſs or Diſappointment it may bring upon him. And to this End the following Rules are to be carefully obſerv'd, in order to a right Method of forming our Reſolutions, and the laſting Effect and Benefit of them. *First, They muſt be ſerious and hearty.* And we muſt not only abhor all Hypocriſy, in promiſing what we never intend to perform; but muſt take care moreover, that we be not faint and indifferent in them. We muſt not be like St. *Auguſtin* in his Youth, who afterwards penitently profeſſes of himſelf, that *when he was young, * he beg'd of God to endue him with Chaſtity, ſaying, Give me Chaſtity, but not yet; fearing to be heard in ſuch his Requeſt, and be preſently heal'd, whilſt in truth he wanted to have his Luſts ſtill further ſatisfied, rather than extinguiſh'd*; nor like *Pharaoh*, who whilſt God's Hand lay heavy upon him, made fair Promiſes to *Moſes* and *Aaron*, that he would detain the People no longer, and perhaps he had ſome Thoughts of doing as he ſaid for the preſent, but did not mind to perform his Promiſe, when again at Eaſe, but exerciſed his wonted Severity towards them. We muſt rather ſet our ſelves to imitate *Zacchæus*, who to ſhew the Sincerity of his Repentance, immediately offer'd to give largely to the Poor, and to make a fourfold Reſtitution to all he had wronged. We muſt *turn to the Lord our God with all our Heart, and with all our Soul*, muſt deal clearly and uprightly with him, and not ſeek to deceive either

Our Reſolutions muſt be ſerious and hearty.

Exod. 8. 8, 15, & 28, 32. *Chap.* 9. 28, 35. *Chap.* 10. 24, 27.

St. Luke. 19. 8.

Deut. 30. 10.

* B. Aug. Confeſſ. l. 8. c. 7.

him

him or our ſelves with fair Promiſes of what we are not much concern'd whether we perform or no, but muſt ſee to undertake nothing but what at the ſame Time we are fully purpoſed to fulfil to the utmoſt of our Power. Which that we may do as we ought, a *Second* Rule that I would recommend in the forming our holy Reſolutions is, *that they be built upon ſuch Foundations as will hold at all Times, and in all Caſes.* They muſt not be made upon any contingent particular Reaſons, which may vary, and ſo may fail us; and upon the Failure whereof we may be in danger of relapſing into our former evil Courſes. We muſt not renounce a Sin only becauſe it is ſhameful or diſadvantageous to our temporal Welfare; becauſe ſo we ſhall be apt to be drawn into it, when it may be committed with Privacy and Impunity; nor only becauſe we are ſick and apprehend our ſelves like to die, becauſe then if we recover, the main Occaſion of our Reſolution will be removed for the preſent, and ſo we ſhall be tempted to Sin again, in hope of another Opportunity of Repenting, when Death ſhall threaten us again. If we reſolve to be honeſt, only in hope of acquiring hereby a good Reputation, and ſo of advancing our ſelves in the World; this Reſolution will laſt no longer, if we once happen to meet with an Opportunity of anſwering this End by ſome unexpected beneficial Act of Knavery that may turn to great Account, and do our Buſineſs at once. And ſo in other Caſes, an uncertain fallible Foundation of our Reſolutions will be in great Danger of rendring them ineffectual; at leaſt we can never be ſure it will not. And he that would acquit himſelf like a good Chriſtian, muſt ſeek therefore for a firmer

Such as will hold at all Times, and in all Caſes.

mer Basis whereon to ground his Resolutions, which will enable them to hold out, like a *House built upon a Rock*, against all the Violence of Wind or Water. He must see that they proceed from a true Sense of the Evil of Sin, and the Excellency and Advantage of Virtue and Goodness, the Duty he owes to his Maker, the Worth of his immortal Soul, the Covenant he enter'd into at his Baptism, the Profession he makes of following his blessed Saviour's Example, and being *Holy, as he which has called him is Holy*, a Remembrance of God's Presence always with us, and the Account he will exact from each one of us at the last Day, and the like. These are Reasons that will hold good always, and be a Defence against all kind of Sin, and all Temptations to it, and can be slighted by none that are seriously concern'd for their own Welfare, either here or hereafter. And what Resolutions are thus firmly settled, but none else, may safely be relied upon, as like to answer their Designs upon all Occasions and Trials. Besides which, a *Third* Rule to be observ'd in making our Resolutions is, *that they be made with due Deliberation*, and a through Enquiry into the Nature of the Duty whereto we are engaging our selves, in as much as otherwise it is shrewdly to be suspected they will not last long. We may design well in making them; but this is not enough, unless we take Care to make them well, I mean upon such a through Observation of the Advantages and Inconveniencies that may attend them on the one Hand and on the other, as may prepare us for an undaunted Encounter with all the Opposition we may meet with in the Prosecution of them. And we must therefore take the same

With due Deliberation.

ſame Courſe as he, *who intending to build a Tower, ſits down firſt and counteth the Coſt, whether he hath ſufficient to finiſh it*; or that *King*, who *going to make War againſt another King, ſiteth down firſt and conſulteth, whether he be able with Ten Thouſand, to meet him that cometh againſt him with Twenty Thouſand.* And indeed if this Courſe be not taken, no one knows to what Miſchiefs he ſhall expoſe himſelf for want of it. For let a Man reſolve ever ſo ſeriouſly and piouſly, and upon ever ſo ſound a Principle, yet he may poſſibly be far from having reſolved aright, unleſs his Reſolution be conſiderate, and well weighed before-hand. It is not enough to reſolve upon a new Life, on ſome ſudden Tranſport, ſome unuſual Fit of Devotion, ſome preſent ill Conſequence he has felt of his Sins; or without attending to the proper Method to be taken, and Means to be uſed in order to a Reformation: *He that* thus *founds* his *good Reſolutions upon Heats of Paſſion, ſets his Soul*, as a great Man ſpeaks, **upon a Weathercock, which every contrary Blaſt of Humour or Intereſt blows into a contrary Poſition.* His indeliberate Reſolutions may light upon a wrong Object, and ſo become unlawful, or lay upon him unneceſſary Impoſitions, and ſo prove a needleſs Burden to him; or they may fail in Time of Trial, and ſo leave him in a far worſe Condition than if they had never been made. 1. They may light, I ſay, upon a wrong Object, and ſo become unlawful. The Bounds between Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, Virtue and Vice, are not always ſo manifeſt and clear, but that a well-meaning

St. Luke 14. 28, 31.

* Dr. *Scott's* Practical Diſcourſes. *Vol.* 1. *p.* 364.

Man

Man may poſſibly be miſtaken concerning them. Not only the Extremities are eaſily diſtinguiſh'd, but nearer Approaches too may be eaſily diſcernible. Yet the Borders of them lie ſo cloſe, and the Ridge that parts them is ſo narrow, and in ſome Caſes makes ſo little Appearance, that a Man may be apt to ſtep over it before he is aware. And for this Reaſon when he is to fix his Choice, he had need have his Eyes and his Thoughts about him, and obſerve well with himſelf what Courſe he is to take, and where he may ſafely fix his Mark. And if he do not, he may too late find that he has had the Misfortune to embrace Covetouſneſs, inſtead of a prudent Management; or Profuſeneſs on the other Hand, inſtead of a becoming Hoſpitality; Superſtition, inſtead of true and regular Devotion; Revenge, inſtead of a juſt Vindication of himſelf; Diſobedience to the Commands of lawful Authority, inſtead of a Care for Purity of God's Worſhip; or Treaſon and Rebellion, inſtead of a due Regard to the Safety and Welfare of Society. This is one Reaſon, and a very good one, why a Man ſhould make all his Reſolutions of Amendment and a holy Life, with a great deal of Warineſs and Deliberation, to prevent his miſtaking the Nature of his Duty, and that he may not be really ſinning againſt God, whilſt he takes himſelf to be doing him Service. And another is, to avoid laying needleſs Impoſitions upon himſelf, by obliging himſelf to ſuch Courſes, as, if lawful, will much abridge his Chriſtian Liberty, and ſo by that Means become burdenſome to him. Such are Vows of Celibacy and of wilful Poverty, of ſpending more Time in Retirement and Devotion than a Man's Circumſtances

cumſtances can reaſonably allow of; of Abſtinence from ſome particular Sorts of Meat or Drink; or whatever lays a greater Reſtraint upon People than is proper for them, all Things conſider'd. Which might eaſily be avoided by a deliberate weighing all ſuch Vows or Reflections beforehand, and examining what Ground there is for them, and what Inconveniencies and Miſchiefs may enſue upon them. This therefore common Prudence would direct to, as a proper Method for preventing ſuch Troubles and Inconveniencies as a Man might otherwiſe run into, to the Prejudice of his Health, or his Eſtate, or his Liberty either of Soul or Body, and might ſometimes be an unforeſeen Occaſion of expoſing him to ſtrong Temptations of Sin. Again, Indeliberate Reſolutions oftentimes fail upon Trial, and ſo leave a Man in a far worſe Condition than if they had never been made. Such Reſolutions made as in the Preſence of Almighty God, and in order to his Service are an Obligation to behave our ſelves accordingly. And conſequently the Breach of them muſt be an Aggravation of our Sins committed in Violation of ſuch Obligation, and what all ought therefore carefully to guard againſt. Which there is no other way of doing, that I know of, but by a diligent Obſervance of all our Reſolutions, that they be made with good Deliberation, and a careful Enquiry into the true Nature of what we make the Matter of them. If this Courſe be not conſtantly taken, no Wonder if our Reſolutions often fail us when we come to try them, and ſhould expect to ſee the good Effect of them. For *Firſt*, Temptations may be ſtronger than we expected, and ſo may unhappily prevail againſt

ſuch, as apprehended no Manner of Danger from them; as it happen'd in St. *Peter's* Denial of his Lord. This Apoſtle, in a great Devotion to his Saviour, defies all Enemies to overcome his Love and Duty to him, he would chooſe to die with him, rather than be guilty of any Want of Fidelity towards him; and whatſoever Trials, Afflictions, and Perſecutions might befall him, though all the reſt of the Diſciples ſhould faint and ſink under them, he doubted not but to be able to bear up againſt them. So he profeſſes, St. *Mat.* 26. 33. *Though all Men ſhould be offended becauſe of thee, yet will I never be offended*; and again, Ver. 35. *Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* But he had not ſufficiently attended to the Difficulties that might ariſe, the Adverſaries that might terrify him, the unexpected Aſſaults that might ſurprize him, and the Dangers that might threaten him. He had not conſider'd that one of the High-Prieſts Maids might know him, his own Speech might diſcover him, and his Heart hereupon might fail him. He knew in himſelf what Love he had for his Lord and Maſter, but not to what Inconveniencies it might expoſe him, and how far they might be like to prevail againſt him. And hence notwithſtanding all the Warmth of his preſent Paſſion, not many Hours had paſſed, before he, according to our Lord's Prediction, curſed and ſwore, and denied that he knew him. And if this bleſſed Apoſtle was ſo eaſily prevailed with to break the Promiſe he had ſo lately made, what Reaſon have we all, poor feeble Creatures as we are, to guard againſt the like Aſſaults, with all the Diligence that may be? Here we have a pregnant Inſtance of humane Frailty; which

ought

ought to convince us all, how little we are to rely upon our own Strength, and how little Truſt is to be given to thoſe good Purpoſes, how ſincere ſoever, that are taken up without a deliberate Contemplation of what may probably be the Effect of them. *Secondly*, We our ſelves may prove weaker than we expected; and notwithſtanding our good Opinion of our ſelves, may become as flexible as the young Man in the **Comedian*, all whoſe firmeſt Purpoſes were in great Danger of being perfectly fruſtrated by a little fawning upon him, and a few counterfeit Tears. It was not *Reuben*'s Caſe alone, to be as his Father *Jacob* repreſents him, *unſtable as Water*; but whoſoever well obſerves the Carriage of the reſt of the World, and how readily they change their Mind upon ſome little Alteration in their Circumſtances, will eaſily diſcover the Generality of Mankind to reſemble him too nearly in this Defect, and that all ought therefore to be very watchful over themſelves, that they do not relapſe into their former Wickedneſs before they are well ſenſible of their Danger. Eſpecially conſidering that, *Thirdly*, our preſent Zeal may ſoon decay and languiſh, and ſo may leave us in a manner indifferent as to the Performance of what we had ſo eagerly reſolv'd upon; and what we thought a perfect Hatred to our Sins, may in a little Time diſcover it ſelf to be only a ſudden Heat of Paſſion, which preſently wears off, and ſo they again inſinuate themſelves as if they had never been reſolved againſt. Hence too many

* *Hæc verba, mehercule, una falſa Lachrymula,*
Quam Oculos terendo miſerè vix vi expreſſerit,
Reſtinguet. —— Teren. Eunuch. Act 1. Scene 1.

after all their Confidence in their own Strength, and the Firmneſs of their good Purpoſes, have ſtarted back in a little Time; like the Church of *Epheſus*, have *left their firſt Love*; like the *Seed ſown among the Thorns*, have had all their good Deſigns *choked with the Cares, and Riches, and Pleaſures of this World, ſo as to bring no Fruit to Perfection*; or like the *Jews*, who were once ſo tranſported with Zeal for our Saviour, that *they would take him by Force and make him a King*; yet not long after were as zealouſly ſet againſt him, crying, *Away with him, away with him, crucify him, crucify him, we have no King but Cæſar*. Such fickle uncertain Creatures are Men, when left to themſelves; and ſo little Dependance is there upon their firmeſt Reſolutions, when not built upon ſolid Principles, and duly conſider'd beforehand, and when not ſupported and aſſiſted by the Grace of God. *Ye did run well*, ſays St. *Paul* to the *Galatians, Who did hinder you, that ye ſhould not obey the Truth?* They acquitted themſelves laudably, and as became good Chriſtians, at their firſt ſetting out; yet it ſeems not long after, the Apoſtle found Cauſe to reprehend them for not continuing on their Courſe. And thus it frequently fares with others, who having enter'd upon a new Courſe of Life, think themſelves immoveably ſettled in it, yet to their Shame and Ruin are by Degrees drawn off from their haſty and ill-grounded Reſolutions, as if, *having begun in the Spirit*, they could any Way hope to *be made perfect by the Fleſh*. They reſolved upon a religious Life in the groſs, without enquiring aright into the ſeveral Duties implied in it; but alas! when they came to be tried in the particular Parts of it, this they had never thought

Rev. 2. 4. St. Luke 8. 14. St. John 6. 14, 15. St. John 19. 15. Gal. 5. 7. Gal. 3. 3.

thought of, and that is of a different Nature from what they apprehended; one Duty ſeems not ſo neceſſary as they had at firſt conceiv'd it to be, and another is more difficult, and will put them to a great deal more Trouble and Pains than they imagin'd; and hence they ſtart back, and repent of their good Reſolutions, when they find greater Diligence, and Mortification, and Self-denial, neceſſary in order to the Execution of them, than they had expected. In a Fit of Religion they reſolved to caſhire all their Luſts, and become new Men, and lead a very different Life from what they had led formerly; but all this they did raſhly, reſolving upon they knew not what, nor what Power or Ability they had for the Performance of it. And no one ought to think it ſtrange, if an Enterpriſe thus indeliberately undertaken, were let fall afterwards, when they came to find their Error, and Experience taught them, that a great deal more was required of them, than they thought of when they made their Reſolution. They were in hope of obtaining their Pardon and Reconciliation with their offended God, and ſo to eſcape the Wrath to come, and this made them deſirous to enter into a new Covenant with him, to ſerve and obey him, and to do all his Will; this therefore they readily agreed to in general Terms. But when they found themſelves touched in the moſt ſenſible Part, and that they muſt neceſſarily quit their moſt beloved Luſts, and engage in what moſt directly thwarted their natural Inclinations, they began to bethink themſelves, and were ready to cry out with thoſe at *Capernaum*, *This is a hard Saying, who can hear it?* Wherefore, to ſecure us againſt any ſuch unhappy Diſappoint- St. John 6. 60.

ment, we must be sure to take Time before we fix our Resolution, considering well what it is we are about to resolve upon, and what Reason we have for engaging in it, weighing the Arguments on both Sides, and thence making such a Determination, as we may reasonably conclude we shall never be able to repent of. The most serious Thoughts, and most advised Consultations and Debates with our selves, are little enough to form such a Purpose of Amendment, as may hold out in all Times, and upon all Occasions. But I fear I have enlarged too far upon this Head.

Anchith. Very far from it I assure you, as to my self. And I believe I may answer for *Timotheus*, that he would not have had one Word omitted of what you have deliver'd with so much Judgment and Reason.

Timoth. I cannot but own the Truth of what our good Friend has undertaken for me; and shall be very thankful, if you will please to proceed in your own Way, since *Anchithanes*, you hear, is still disposed to hearken to you.

Anchith. This useful and truly Christian Advice is a very good Remedy against my Distemper, and makes me pass the Time much easier than I could hope to have done, if left to my self. And therefore, pray *Theophilus* be so kind as to add what farther Directions you think proper concerning this weighty Duty.

Theoph. I have hitherto observ'd that all our Resolutions of a holy Life ought to be *serious and hearty*, settled *upon a sound and lasting Principle*, and *with due Deliberation, and thorough Consideration of what we undertake, and whether it be like to hold out or not.* And now I add, in the *Fourth Place*, that they must be *Perfect and Entire*,

They must be Perfect and Entire.

tire, ſo as to comprehend our whole Duty, and guard againſt all kind of Sin. They muſt extend to, and comprehend in them whatever Almighty God has requir'd at our Hands, and muſt exclude, and debar from whatever is contrary to his moſt holy Will. They muſt be free from all By-Ends, and ſiniſter Deſigns and Aims, and muſt, like the Pſalmiſt, *have reſpect to all God's Commandments.* For if we have a Reſerve for any one Sin, we cannot be ſaid to ſerve God with all our Heart; but know aſſuredly on the other Hand, that by this our ſingle Sort of Offence, we are in effect guilty of a Breach of the whole Law. So ſays St. *James, Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all.* 'Tis but a ſmall Excuſe, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, on the Place, 'To think that this is but one Tranſ-"greſſion, and therefore not conſiderable: "For the Obedience of God's Will is requi-"red univerſally to all that he commands, and "he that offends in one, though he keep all "the reſt, is guilty of the Breach of that "Obedience, and puniſhable as well as if he "had broken all. All a Man's Zeal for ſome Part of his Duty will never denominate him Holy, or capacitate him for the Reward of thoſe that are ſo, ſo long as he takes Liberty to tranſgreſs in any other. It is ſo far from this, that ſince *the ſame Power and Authority of God gives Sanction to all his Laws, as a late learned* * *Author ſpeaks, It is a virtual diſowning and diſclaiming of that, wilfully to diſobey it, and rebel againſt it, and openly oppoſe it in any Caſe; which he does who lives in any known and wilful*

Pſal. 119. 6.

St. James 2. 10.

* Dr. *Pain* of Repentance. *Chap.* 7. *Sect.* 1.

Sin. And he is therefore *to be accounted an Enemy and Traytor to Heaven, and punish'd as such, who renounces its absolute Power and Right to govern him in all Things, and subverts the whole Foundation of Obedience and Submission to it.* This one Sin continued in, is like *the dead Flies in the Ointment, causing it to send forth a stinking Savour*; it pollutes and vitiates all our Righteousness, and makes it unagreeable to Almighty God; and so is a ready Means of robbing us of our Reward. Besides that, in the mean Time, it estranges the Spirit of God from us, subjects us to the Dominion of Vice, exposes us to other Kinds of Sins, gives the Devil a Power over us, and if not repented of, we know not how soon it may lodge us in Hell for all Eternity. So that you see there is great Reason for every one that would be saved, to resolve against all Sorts of Sins, lesser as well as greater, private as well as publick, of Omission as well as Commission; such as are design'd to please others, as well as those intended only to please our selves. Whatsoever Sort of Iniquity it be, a good Christian cannot but think himself indispensably oblig'd to resolve against it, as ever he would answer his most holy Profession, or would be happy, either here or hereafter. None must reckon himself to have finish'd his Work, but to have begun it only, who has renounc'd his Sins in general; but yet retains an Affection for some one darling Lust or Passion. Nor can that be esteemed a truly Christian Resolution, which is not so levelled against all Sins, as to make no Allowance for any one Breach of God's Commandments, under whatsoever Temptation, or in whatsoever Circumstances. Hence therefore it follows, that in the *Fifth Place* our Re-

Eccles. 10. 1.

solutions

solutions must be *Adequate to all Times and Conditions.* First, *To all Times.* They must not respect Futurity only, but the present Time, that without any Delay we may * *make haste to keep God's Commandments.* For to determine to repent hereafter, is in truth no better than to resolve to be wicked at present. It is not to forsake our Sins, but to be willing to keep them as long as we can, with the least Hope of Impunity; and even to venture our immortal Souls rather than part with them. This is only a Device to cheat Peoples Consciences, and deceive themselves; and quiet their Minds with a Belief, that one Time or other they shall certainly do, what they cannot endure to think of, and would gladly excuse themselves from, and therefore are never like to do, tho' they were to live to the Age of *Methuselah.* Secondly, *To all Conditions.* Our Resolutions must be made for the Hour of Temptation and the Time of Trial; such as may hold in spite of the most plausible Insinuations, and the most formidable Attempts to the contrary. Then it is that we have the greatest Use of them; and they will signify very little to us, if they fail us at such a Time of Need. It is an easy Matter to serve God, so long as it suits with our own Temper, and is agreeable to our natural Inclinations, and serves to promote our secular Interests and Designs. But the Proof of our Fidelity is, when we are strongly solicited to depart from it; when we keep close to our Duty in defiance of all the most violent Opposition the Tempter can raise against it. And till we have fix'd our Resolutions so as to prepare us for such a Time of Trial, they will be in apparent Danger of proving like *Egypt's broken Reed,* which is of no real

Must be adequate to all Times and Conditions.

* Psal. 119. 60.

If. 36. 6.

The Means must be resolved upon as well as the Duty.

real Use, no Stability or Strength; but *if a Man lean upon it, it will go into his Hand and pierce it. Sixthly*, We must resolve, *not only upon the Duties* to be perform'd by us, but upon the Means necessary for the Performance of them; nor only against all Sins, but likewise against the Temptations and Inducements to them. Otherwise all our Resolutions are like to prove of very little Advantage to us. For let a Man resolve against Drunkenness, this will signify little to him, unless he resolve at the same Time, against such Companions as have been formerly, and are still most like to be, the unhappy Instruments of betraying him into it. Let another resolve against Cheating, yet he will very hardly keep clear of it, unless he resolve likewise to keep out of the Way of such Temptations, as have rarely failed of putting them upon it. Let a Third resolve against all Idolatry; yet unless he shall call to Mind, to what Barbarities such a Resolution may not improbably expose him, and resolve to bear them all rather than part with his Integrity; there is little Reason to hope a general Resolution will carry him through them. In short, a Man may as well resolve to be Learned without Reading, to acquire an Estate without Sobriety and Industry, to be Healthful without observing any of the Rules that may conduce to make him so, or Safe without keeping out of the Way of Danger and Harm; as to be Good, and Holy, and Religious, without resolving in like Manner upon the proper Helps and Instruments of Virtue, Religion, and Holiness. *Seventhly* and lastly, That our Resolutions may prove effectual to the good Ends for which they are design'd, another requisite is, that *we faithfully and diligently*

And we must diligently put them in practice.

gently apply our ſelves to put them in practice. It is by no Means enough to have reſolved well, nor will ever prove of any Advantage to us, unleſs we be mindful to live well too. *The only way,* as a great Man ſpeaks, * *to recover our ſelves to* a Chriſtian *Temper of Mind after a vicious Courſe of Life, is in truth the very ſame by which a Man recovers his Health after a long Diſeaſe,* viz. *by God's Bleſſing upon the diligent Uſe of fit Means, and any other Way is no more now to be expected than Prophecy and Miracles.* Thus I have inſtanced in the ſeveral Ingredients that go to the making up a truly Chriſtian Reſolution of ſerving God as the Goſpel requires; and have obſerv'd that they are to be not counterfeit and hypocritical, nor looſe and indifferent, but ſerious and hearty; are to be upon a firm and ſolid Principle that may make them like a Houſe built upon a Rock, immoveable, and not to be ſhaken with Wind or Tide; and not haſty or inconſiderate, but upon mature Deliberation, and a thorough Enquiry into the divers Inconveniencies and Difficulties that may occur in the Performance of them; that they are to be Perfect and Entire, ſo as to take in the whole of our Duty, and provide againſt all Kinds of Sin; and ſuited to all Times and States, ſo as to hold out in whatever Circumſtances; and are therefore to reach to, not only the Duties requir'd, but the Means too that are neceſſary in order to the Diſcharge of them; and in the laſt Place, that we are not to acquieſce in reſolving, but muſt vigorouſly ſet our ſelves, and uſe our utmoſt Diligence and Application to reduce our Reſolutions to

* Dr. *Calamy*, Serm. 16. p. 347.

Practice,

Practice, that ſo we may ſee thoſe happy Fruits and Effects of them, without which they will be of no Uſe to any of us, nor ſerve to any other Purpoſe than to heighten our Guilt, and add to our Condemnation. And now I ſhall only beg your farther Patience, till I briefly ſubjoin theſe Three following Directions, in order to the better Succeſs of ſuch our Reſolutions. *Firſt*, That they be repeated and renewed Day by Day; becauſe this will fix them in our Minds, and encreaſe the Danger of departing from them, and ſo will make us the more diligently obſervant of them, that they prove not an Occaſion of our heavier Deſtruction. Next, That they be preſently made known to the World, ſo as that it may appear we are not aſham'd to own to all we converſe with, that we are become a different Sort of Men from what we had been formerly. This will be an eſpecial Means of making us the more obſervant of them, leſt otherwiſe we become a Scorn and Deriſion to thoſe to whom we made this Declaration, who will be apt to triumph over us, and mock and laugh at us, if they ſee us give back again, after proceeding thus far towards a Reformation; and will beſides be a ſingular Preſervative againſt the Aſſaults of others, who will not be ſo forward to entice us to any Kind of Sin, when they are fully inform'd beforehand, that their Attempts will be in vain, and that we have already declar'd againſt giving Ear to them. And again, *Thirdly*, That we do not truſt to our own Strength for the Performance of them, but earneſtly ſue to God for his Grace and Aſſiſtance, that having *begun ſo good a Work in us, he will perform it until the Day of Jeſus Chriſt*. Without the Help of his holy Spirit, we

we ſhall ſoon flag and falter, and can never hope for Succeſs in what we ſo vainly attempt through our own Power. And we muſt therefore be ſure at all Times to look up to him, and depend upon his Strength for carrying us through all Difficulties and Trials. And ſo, but not otherwiſe, if we uſe our own hearty Endeavours, and be continually upon our Watch, we may promiſe our ſelves that our good Purpoſes ſhall not fail us, but that we ſhall find the happy Effect of them to our Joy and Comfort here, and our eternal Salvation in the other World.

Timoth. I thank you, good *Theophilus*, for the Pains you have ſo long together taken for my Information; and I faithfully promiſe I will endeavour to make the beſt Uſe I can of your Inſtructions, for the Benefit both of my ſelf and others. Though, I thank God, I have never allowed my ſelf in the Practice of any known Vice, as conſidering how highly Diſpleaſing that is to Almighty God, what horrid Ingratitude it argues to our bleſſed Saviour, who has done and ſuffer'd ſo much for me; what an Affront it is to the holy Spirit of God, what a Contradiction to our own Reaſon, and eſpecially to the Covenant I enter'd into at my Baptiſm, and which I have made Profeſſion of carefully, and conſcientiouſly obſerving ever ſince, of what miſchievous Conſequence it would be at preſent, and how intolerably deſtructive hereafter; yet have I not had ſuch a conſtant Senſe of Religion upon my Mind, nor been ſo diligent and induſtrious in the Ways of Holineſs as I am ſenſible I ought to have been. But by the Grace of God I will become more watchful for the future, not only to abſtain from Evil, but

to

to do Good, to ſerve and worſhip God, and promote his Honour, according to my Abilities and Opportunities, to improve my own Mind, that I may more readily run the Way of his Commandments, and to do what Service I can to my Neighbours and Acquaintance. This is my fix'd Purpoſe and Reſolution; and that I may faithfully put it in Execution.

A Prayer for Grace to fulfil our good Purpoſes and Reſolutions.

O *Gracious God, without whom nothing is ſtrong, nothing is holy, infuſe I beſeech thee ſuch a Meaſure of Grace into my Heart, as that I may ſpend the Remainder of my Days in thy Service, and to thy Glory. Confirm and ſtrengthen my good Reſolutions, and fix them more and more in my Mind, that they may be always before me, and may be a Means of quickening my Diligence, and making me vigorous and unwearied in thy Service. I am thine by Creation, by Redemption, and by a voluntary Dedication of my ſelf to thee; ſuffer me not to be remiſs and negligent in anſwering ſuch weighty Obligations. But as I have ſworn, ſo let it be my daily Study, and the great and chief Endeavour of my Life to perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments. Let a Conſideration of the great Work I have upon my Hands, and the little Time I have to do it in, and withal, that this little Time may poſſibly be much leſs than I imagine it to be; let theſe Thoughts, I beſeech thee, have their proper Influence upon me, and not ſuffer me one Day longer to forbear fulfilling all the good Purpoſes thou haſt be-*

gotten in me. That, without any Delay, I may ſet my ſelf to make the beſt Amends I ſhall be able for my paſt Miſcarriages, by becoming ſo much the more circumſpect, and the more deſirous to pleaſe thee for the future. Whilſt I live in the World, preſerve me from the Snares and Temptations of it; and enable me to perfect Holineſs in thy Fear, that I may grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, may walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith I am called, may be fruitful in all good Works, and whatever ſhall become of me here, I may make ſure of a happy Eternity with thee hereafter, in the higheſt Heavens, through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

Theoph. You appear, *Timotheus*, to be truly affected with what has been ſaid. I beſeech the Almighty to convince you more and more, not only of the Neceſſity, but of the great Weight and Uſefulneſs of a ſpeedy and hearty Reſolution of ſerving God in all Reſpects. But give me Leave to tell you, that you ſeem not ſufficiently to have attended to what I have ſaid concerning the Deliberation required, in order to a prudent and truly religious Reſolution.

Timoth. This kind Admonition is an Addition to your other Favours; and ſo I take it, though I am to acquaint you, *Theophilus*, that I am not now to begin this Conſideration; but have already done it over and over, only that I have not been ſo ſtrictly obſervant of all my good Reſolutions, as I hope I ſhall be henceforward, by the Grace of God enabling me.

Theoph.

Theoph. May the good God ſtrengthen and aſſiſt all your good Purpoſes to his own Glory, and the Salvation of your precious and immortal Soul. But we have treſpaſſed too far upon *Anchithanes*, and it is high Time now that we leave him to take his Reſt.

Anchith. I return you a Thouſand Thanks, dear *Theophilus*, for this admirable Entertainment, and beg as much more of it, as your Occaſions will permit. It is both delightful and profitable, and for which I ſhall be always obliged to you.

Theoph. Dear *Anchithanes*, I heartily wiſh you a good Night, and do pray God I may find your Health re-eſtabliſh'd when I ſee you next, which, God willing, ſhall be very ſpeedily.

Timoth. I pray God ſend you a good Night, and better Health, if it be his bleſſed Will.

The End of the Firſt VISIT.

The

The Second VISIT.

Of Patience under Sickneſs and other Afflictions.

Theophilus. I Have not heard of *Anchithanes* ſince *Tueſday*, and will therefore go, and make him a Viſit, and ſee how he is. But who are thoſe I obſerve coming this Way? I ſee now they are Two very good Neighbours and Friends, I will ſpeak to them firſt, perhaps they may give me ſome Account of him. My good Friends, I am glad to meet you, and I hope your ſelves and your Families are all well. *The Viſitants meet.*

Euſebius. I thank you, Sir, for your Enquiry, bleſſed be God we are all well, and at your Service. But have you heard the News of our good Friend *Anchithanes*?

Theoph. I ſaw him ſome Days ſince, and thought him in no dangerous Condition. And I have heard ſince that he was better. But for theſe Two or Three Days laſt paſt I have heard nothing of him; for which Reaſon I was going now to ſee how he is.

Euſeb. I pray God we may find him better than I expect. For my Friend here, *Philogeiton*, brings but an uncomfortable Account of him.

Theoph. Have you ſeen him to Day, Sir?

Philogeiton. No, Sir; but I met his Servant, who told me he was in a high Fever, and exceeding uneaſy.

Theoph. I am very ſorry to hear it. And if you pleaſe, we will loſe no Time.

Euſeb. } We are ready to attend you, Sir,
Philog. } as ſoon as you pleaſe.

Theoph. See yonder, his Windows are all ſhut, which is but a bad Sign, and makes me fear your Information is too true.

Philog. I doubt you will find it ſo.

Theoph. The Door I ſee is open, and perhaps you may not know the Way, and therefore that we may ſpend no Time in Ceremony, if you pleaſe to excuſe me, I will lead you in to him. But hark; what melancholick doleful Noiſe is this I hear?

Euſeb. It is *Anchithanes* bemoaning himſelf.

Theoph. I perceive now it is his Voice. He ſeems to be deſperately ill; the Lord help him. I cannot but greatly commiſerate his painful Condition. Yet that which grieves me more is, to hear ſo good a Man thus ſadly diſcompos'd, thus uneaſy and impatient under the Burden Almighty God has thought fit to lay upon him. But why do we forbear to go in, and try to comfort him under his Pains? And may the Father of Mercies, and God of all Conſolations, of his infinite Mercy, go with us to bleſs and proſper our well-meant Endeavours.

Philog. Amen. Amen.

Euſeb. Here his Servant comes, who will tell us, whether we can go in now.

Theoph. We are very ſorry to hear your Maſter make ſuch ſad Complaint.

Servant. He is very ſick at preſent; but we hope the Violence of his Fit abates, and that he will be eaſier in a while. Will you pleaſe, Gentlemen, to walk up to him?

Euſeb. We came for that Purpoſe.

Serv. He's this Way.

Anchith. * *Wo is me, my Mother, that thou haſt born me!* Alas! † *Why died I not in the Birth? Why did I not give up the Ghoſt when I came out of the Belly? Why did the Knees prevent me? Or why the Breaſts that I ſhould ſuck? For now had I lien ſtill, and been quiet, I ſhould have ſlept; then had I been at reſt?* Oh the Grave, the Grave! the Place of Quietneſs and Eaſe! || *There the Wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the Weary are at reſt: There the Priſoners reſt together, they hear not the Voice of the Oppreſſor. The great and the ſmall are there; and the Servant is free from his Maſter. Wherefore is Light given to him that is in Miſery, and Life unto the bitter in Soul? Which long for Death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid Treaſures? Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the Grave.* You all ſee my woful diſconſolate State; and I am quite tir'd and ſpent with it. *My Sighing comes before I eat; and my Roarings are poured out like the Waters.* ——— The Sick Man's Complaint.

* Jer. 15. 10.

† Job. 3. 11, 12, 13.

|| Ver. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

Ver. 24.

Theoph. My dear Friend, why ſo impatient? No doubt your Diſeaſe is heavy upon you; yet you ought to remember by whom it is ſent, and what intire Reſignation you owe to his Will, and what ready Submiſſion all his Determinations require at your Hands. It was God that gave you your Life, and Breath, and all the good Things you ever enjoy'd; and he may recall them whenſoever he pleaſes. He may put an End to your Life this very Moment. Or if he chooſe rather to prolong your Days, he may cauſe you to paſs them in Sorrow and Anguiſh, and you, however, have no juſt Cauſe of Complaint, by reaſon of ſuch his Diſpenſation towards you. We are come here to enquire after your Health, and do you the beſt Service in our

For which he is juſtly reprehended.

Power. But give me Leave to tell you, we are troubled to find you in ſuch Diſorder; not ſo much becauſe of the Sickneſs God has been pleas'd to viſit you with, though this be Matter of no ſmall Grief to us, as becauſe you are ſo unable to bear it. It would far better become you to reſt ſatisfied, that a wiſe and good God will lay nothing upon you but for wiſe and good Ends, and that *all Things* you do, or may ſuffer, *ſhall work together for your Good, if you truly love* and fear him. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.* And nothing can ever befall you, but he knows how to turn it to your Advantage.

Rom. 8. 28.

Lam. 3. 33.

Anchith. Welcome my good Friends. It is very kindly done of you to viſit a poor ſick Wretch, as you ſee I am. I am very unfit Company for you, my Sickneſs is ſo ſevere upon me. And oh! that the End of my Life were come! I am overwhelm'd with Pain. All my Comfort is gone; and my Joy is turned into Sighs, and Groans, and perpetual Complaints.

Euſeb. Remember, *Anchithanes*, that you are a Chriſtian, and it is God who ſends your Sickneſs, and you are therefore nearly concern'd to bear all that he lays upon you, with a perfect Submiſſion to his moſt holy Will.

Anchith. I own my Fault, and ſhall endeavour to amend it. But really my Sickneſs is ſuch as Fleſh and Blood cannot tell how to bear, though I do ſtruggle all I can.

Patience under Sickneſs and other Afflictions, a neceſſary Duty.

Euſeb. Fleſh and Blood perhaps cannot bear it. But Reaſon and Underſtanding may, and Religion muſt bear it, without Fretting and Diſcontent, conſidering from whom it comes, and for what Ends it may be inflicted.

Theoph.

Theoph. To murmur and be diſſatisfied at God's Dealing with you, is ſo quite wrong, that nothing can be more undutiful or unbecoming the Relation you ſtand in to Almighty God, nor any Thing more clearly againſt your own Intereſt, both Temporal and Eternal. Patience and Submiſſion to the Divine Will, even under our greateſt Preſſures and Calamities, is a neceſſary Chriſtian Virtue, and ſuch as we all make Profeſſion of. And every Deviation from it is not only a Violation of the Laws of our Religion, but it argues a great Diſtruſt of God's Goodneſs, and is beſides a Wrong to our ſelves. *I was dumb,* ſays the Pſalmiſt, *and opened not my Mouth, becauſe it was thy doing.* And *wo unto him,* ſaith the Prophet *Iſaiah, Who ſtriveth with his Maker; ſhall the Clay ſay to him that faſhioned it, what makeſt thou? Wherefore doth the living Man complain,* ſays the Prophet *Jeremiah, a Man for the Puniſhment of his Sins?* And ſays *Micah, I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him.* And in the New Teſtament we are taught to be * *patient in Tribulation,* and † *in whatever State we are, therewith to be content,* and || not to *murmur* at God's Dealing with us, but * to *ſubmit our ſelves to God,* and † *caſt our Care upon him,* not doubting but that *he will take Care of us,* when we do ſo. And it is therefore a neceſſary Duty of Chriſtianity, quietly and reſignedly to bear all the Afflictions it pleaſes God to try us with, how ſharp ſoever they be. And the ſharper they are, ſo much the properer Seaſon is it for the Exerciſe of this Virtue, and ſo much the more laudable and conſpicuous does it appear. Beſides, it deſerves to be well conſider'd, that how grievous and ſevere ſoever your preſent Viſitation

Pſal. 39. 9.

Iſ. 45. 9.

Lament. 3. 39.

Mic. 7. 9.

* Rom. 12. 12.

† Phil. 4. 11.

|| 1 Cor. 10. 10.

* St. James 5. 7.

† 1 St. Pet. 5. 7.

tion be, it falls vaſtly ſhort of what our bleſſed Lord willingly condeſcended to ſuffer upon our Account. *You know the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for our Sakes he became poor, that we through his Poverty might be rich.* And *though he were in the Form of God, and thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, yet made he himſelf of no Reputation, but took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeneſs of Men; and being found in Faſhion as a Man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs.* Our bleſſed Lord, the only begotten and dearly beloved Son of God, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, did not refuſe to debaſe himſelf to the loweſt Degree, to ſuffer Want, and Penury, and Labour, and Toil, and Contempt, and Diſgrace; and at laſt, to die the moſt painful, as well as the moſt ſhameful of Deaths, that of the Croſs. And can any, that pretend to be his Diſciples, grudge and murmur at any leſſer Afflictions they may meet with? *It is enough for the Diſciple that he be as his Maſter, and the Servant as his Lord.* And if our Saviour endured ſuch *a Fight of Afflictions*, and not for his own, but for our Sakes, how totally inexcuſable muſt we leave our ſelves, if we complain and are diſſatisfied, when called upon to *tread in his Steps*, and bear ſome lighter Burden, out of Compliance with his Example, and Obedience to his Commands. If we be obliged to *be holy in all manner of Converſation, as he which hath called us is holy*, it neceſſarily follows in particular, that we muſt ſtudy to ſhew our ſelves patient under the worſt of Calamities, as he, our Lord, was patient. Nor can any Thing be more reaſonably requir'd of us, than that ſuch as profeſs themſelves Followers

2 Cor. 8. 9.

Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8.

St. Mat. 10. 25.

1 St. Pet. 1. 15.

lowers of the meek and ſuffering *Jeſus*, be always prepar'd to conform themſelves to the Pattern he has ſet them, by ſuffering with unwearied Meekneſs and Reſignation as he did. Eſpecially conſidering farther, that how acute and tormenting ſoever the Pains are, which any of us are called to bear, they however fall infinitely ſhort of what we have all juſtly deſerved by our Folly and Diſobedience. It is of the infinite Mercy of Almighty God, that Death and everlaſting Deſtruction has not been our Portion long ſince, and that we are not now roaring under the Extremity of his Indignation in the bottomleſs Pit, together with the Devil and his Angels. And conſequently whatever Misfortune ſhort of this, is really a great Bleſſing, and is ſo far from being juſt Cauſe of Repining and Diſcontent, that the greateſt Sufferer on this Side Hell, has juſt Reaſon to admire the Clemency, Lenity, and Kindneſs of God, in dealing abundantly more favourably with him than he has deſerv'd. Think therefore with your ſelf, *Anchithanes*, that you can never hope to acquit your ſelf as becomes a good Chriſtian, till you have brought your own Inclinations into ſuch Submiſſion to the Divine Will, as readily and willingly to comply with whatever Portion God ſees fit to chooſe for you. Think what your bleſſed Saviour has endur'd for you, and what intolerable Shame it will be for you to refuſe to undergo the utmoſt Barbarities, much more ſome ſhort Pain or Sickneſs, in Obedience to his Command. Think again, what a Bleſſing it is that you are yet in a State of Salvation, and not deliver'd over to thoſe everlaſting Burnings, which were the due Demerits of your Sins, and to which you might

long ago have been juſtly condemn'd, had it not been for the Patience and Long-ſuffering of Almighty God. Weigh theſe Things well with thy ſelf, and thou wilt ſoon be convinc'd, that inſtead of being diſſatisfied at the divine Diſpenſations, thou haſt great Reaſon on the other Hand to own to God, with thoſe in *Ezra*, that he *has puniſh'd thee leſs*, abundantly leſs, *than thine Iniquities deſerve*, and to reſolve in the Words of the Prophet *Micah*, to *bear the Indignation of the Lord, becauſe thou haſt ſinned againſt him.*

Ezra 9. 13.

Mic. 7. 9.

Anchith. I acknowledge what you ſay to be a great Truth, and ſhall therefore endeavour to compoſe my Mind, and be as eaſy as my Diſtemper will let me be.

Office for the Viſitation of the Sick.

Euſeb. Conſider with your ſelf, that "for "whatſoever Cauſe this Sickneſs is ſent you, "whether it be to try your Patience for the "Example of others, and that your Faith "may be found in the Day of the Lord, lau-"dable, glorious, and honourable, to the En-"creaſe of Glory and eternal Felicity; or "elſe it be ſent to correct and amend in you "whatſoever offends the Eyes of your hea-"venly Father; if you truly repent you of "your Sins, and bear your Sickneſs patient-"ly, truſting in God's Mercy, for his dear "Son *Jeſus Chriſt*'s Sake, and render him "humble Thanks for his fatherly Viſitation, "ſubmitting your ſelf wholly to his Will, it "will certainly turn to your Profit, and help "you forward in the right Way, that leads "to everlaſting Life. Think aright of it therefore, and receive it as God's loving Viſitation.

Anchith. As God's loving Viſitation?

Euſeb.

Euſeb. Yes, ſo I ſay, as God's loving Viſitation; for ſo we are taught by God himſelf in the holy Scripture. *As many as I love,* ſaith God by the Apoſtle St. *John, I rebuke and chaſten,* hereby declaring even his Puniſhments in this World, to be ſent out of Kindneſs and Affection, and for the Good of thoſe who will be prevail'd with to make a right Uſe of them. The wiſe Man alſo inculcates the ſame Truth. *My Son, deſpiſe not the chaſtening of the Lord, nor be weary of his Correction. For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, even as a Father the Son, in whom he delighteth.* As doth alſo the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews,* exactly to the ſame Purpoſe: *If ye endure chaſtening, God dealeth with you as with Sons; for what Son is he whom the Father chaſteneth not? But if ye be without Chaſtiſement, whereof all are Partakers, then are ye Baſtards, and not Sons. Furthermore, we have had Fathers of our Fleſh, which corrected us, and we gave them Reverence; ſhall we not much rather be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily for a few Days chaſtened us after their own Pleaſure: But he for our Profit, that we might be Partakers of his Holineſs.* "Theſe "Words, good Brother, are God's Words, "and written in holy Scripture for our Com- "fort and Inſtruction, that we ſhould pa- "tiently, and with Thankſgiving, bear our "heavenly Father's Correction, whenſoever, "by any Manner of Adverſity, it ſhall pleaſe "his gracious Goodneſs to viſit us; and there "ſhould be no greater Comfort to Chriſtian "Perſons, than to be made like unto Chriſt, "by ſuffering patiently Adverſities, Troubles, "and Sickneſſes. For he himſelf went not "up to Joy, but firſt he ſuffer'd Pain; he en- "ter'd not into his Glory, before he was cru- "cified.

Rev. 3. 19.

Prov. 3. 11, 12.

Hebr. 12. 7, 8, 9, 10.

Office for the Viſitation of the Sick.

" cified. So truly our Way to eternal Joy, is
" to ſuffer here with Chriſt; and our Door
" to enter into eternal Life, is gladly to die
" with Chriſt; that we may riſe again from
" Death, and dwell with him in everlaſting
" Life.

Anchith. I earneſtly deſire to ſubmit to God's Will. But yet I am apt to think no Father uſes his Son, as I am uſed.

Hebr. 12. 11. *Euſeb.* *No Chaſtening for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheleſs, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteouſneſs, unto them which are exerciſed thereby.* Agreeably whereto ſays the Apoſtle St. *James, Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation; for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord has promis'd to them that love him.* St. James 1. 12.

Anchith. I thought my ſelf in a happy State, till I was oppreſſed with this Fit of Sickneſs. I thank God I have always lived above Want, and eaſily, and to my own Satisfaction. But alas! Since this unfortunate Change, I am forced to lie here as you ſee me, weeping and mourning, with a Heart full of Sorrow and Care, tormented to a great Degree, and yet not knowing where to find a Remedy.

Philog. This is to be expected from God only. Phyſicians may adminiſter proper Medicines, but it is God's Bleſſing alone that can make them ſucceſsful. And it is upon him alone you muſt depend for Deliverance.

Anchith. I do ſo; but he has not yet thought fit to grant it; and ſuppoſe he ſhould not, what muſt I do then?

Philog. Then you muſt take Care to follow *Theophilus*'s Advice, and diſpoſe your ſelf in the humbleſt Manner to ſubmit to his Will in whatever he lays upon you. *Euſeb.*

Euſeb. The Way to enter into Glory is by the Croſs. By this Way our Lord and Maſter enter'd into his Father's Kingdom; and if we would follow him thither, it muſt be by the ſame Way. He was *made Perfect by Suffering*. And ſuch who take upon them the Profeſſion of his Name, muſt not think themſelves hardly dealt by, if they be call'd to ſuffer too, whether by the Hand of Man, or by the Hand of God himſelf. And indeed Calamities and Afflictions are an excellent Preparative for a better State; ſuch as Want, Contempt, Reproach, Loſſes, Perſecution, Impriſonment, undeſerved Puniſhment, and which more particularly concerns your ſelf, bodily Pains and Infirmities, and the moſt uneaſy and waſting Diſeaſes; and in a Word, whatſoever ſerves to *mortify the old Man* in us, and to wean our Minds from this World, and raiſe up our Affections to, and make us diligently inquiſitive after another and a better State.

The Way to Glory is by the Croſs.

Hebr. 2. 10. & 5. 8, 9.

Anchith. I ſincerely own God's Power and Authority. But yet it ſeems very hard for me to conceive, that theſe ſevere Viſitations are inflicted by God, upon his beloved Children and Favourites, and are not rather a Token of his heavy Diſpleaſure, and that thoſe who labour under them are to be looked upon as Objects of his Wrath. And to deal plainly with you, all I ſuffer at this Time in my Body is not more grievous to me, than the Apprehenſion I labour under, and cannot ſhake off, that this ſevere Treatment is too plain an Evidence of God's being eſtranged from me, or rather that he hates me.

Theoph. Not ſo faſt, my dear Friend. Think again. Have not the faithfulleſt and beſt Servants of God been conſtantly obſerved, to meet

Afflictions no certain Sign of God's Diſpleaſure.

meet with their Share of Afflictions here, and many Times far beyond divers of the moſt vitious and profligate Wretches? So that were it not for the inward Comfort and Support they find in themſelves in this Life, and their Hopes and Expectations of a better at their Departure hence, a great Part of them at leaſt might juſtly be ſaid to be, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks,
1 Cor. 15. 19. *of all Men moſt miſerable.* Remember the Caſe of *Abel*, of *Jacob*, of *Joſeph*, of *Job*, *Moſes and David*, of St. *John Baptiſt*, *St. Stephen*, *St. Peter*, *St. James*, *St. John*, and the reſt of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, and innumerable other Martyrs and Confeſſors. Were not theſe the Favourites of Heaven, and ſingularly intereſted in the divine Protection and Kindneſs? Or were they without their Croſſes and Trials? Were they not all greatly afflicted, and abundance of them barbarouſly put to death? What Numbers do we read of, of the holieſt and beſt of Men, ſuch *of whom*
Hebr. 11. 36, 37, 38. *the World was not worthy*, who yet *had Trials of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, Bonds and Impriſonments, were ſtoned, were ſawn aſunder, were tempted* by terrible Cruelties, *were ſlain with the Sword*? As others alſo were in Wants, and Diſtreſs, and Fear, and without any certain Habitation, not knowing where to hide themſelves, but being forced to *wander about in Deſerts and Mountains, and in Dens and Caves of the Earth*, covering themſelves with *Sheep-skins and Goats-kins, being deſtituted, afflicted, tormented.* Can you poſſibly deny theſe to have been God's undoubted Children, and truly beloved of him? And on the other Hand, do you imagine, *Anchithanes*, that your Sufferings may in any wiſe be compar'd with theirs? If not, conſider ſeriouſly whether it becomes you to be

be diſſatisfied at your preſent Condition; and be invited to greater Humiliation by reaſon of your Sins, which call aloud for theſe, and much heavier Chaſtiſements; and ſhew your ſelf more ſubmiſſive and reſigned to the divine Will, and that infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, which brings them upon you. Set before your Eyes that admirable Patience of *Job*, under a Series of ſucceſſive Afflictions of divers Kinds. Call to Mind how pitiable and diſconſolate his forlorn Eſtate was, when, from one of the richeſt of all the eaſtern Part of the World, he was ſuddenly ſtrip'd of all. His Oxen and his Aſſes were ſeiz'd by the *Sabeans*, and *his Servants ſlain*, who ſhould have ſaved them out of the Hands of theſe Invaders. *His Sheep*, and others of his *Servants*, were conſum'd by *Fire from Heaven*. His *Camels* were carried away by the *Chaldeans*, and the Remainder of his *Servants* were deſtroyed by them. And to add to ſuch his heavy Calamities, in the laſt Place comes *Fluctus Decumanus*, the ſoreſt Stroke of all; his Children, both *Sons and Daughters*, were all of them kill'd by the Fall of the Houſe, where they were feaſting together. So that now he was all of a ſudden become as poor, as he had been rich but a few Hours before, and as great an Object of Pity, as he might have been before of Envy. Yet durſt he not murmur at God for ſo woful a Change. He remembred by whoſe good Providence it came about, and would not ſuffer himſelf to break forth into any diſcontented and undutiful Language. On the contrary, *He aroſe and rent his Mantle, and ſhaved his Head, and fell down upon the Ground, and worſhipped, and ſaid, Naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked ſhall I return thither; the Lord gave,*

This ſhews particularly by the Caſe of Job.

Job. 1. 3.

Ver. 15.

Ver. 16.

Ver. 17.

Ver. 18, 19.

Ver. 20, 21.

and

and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the Name of the Lord. As much as to ſay, * "I am but "what I was at firſt, and what I muſt have "been again at laſt; and he that hath ſtrip- "ped me of all before I die, hath taken no- "thing away but what he gave. Let him "therefore be praiſed who is the Donor of "all good Things, and the Diſpoſer of all
Job. 1. 22. "Events. *In all this Job ſinned not*, nor ſpake one harſh or unbecoming Word, when all theſe Evils came ſo thick upon him. He did not bemoan himſelf as one rejected by God, and who muſt never more expect his Favour, becauſe he found himſelf at preſent in ſuch calamitous Circumſtances. No, he freely reſign'd himſelf to the Divine Diſpoſal, and bleſſed and praiſed the Almighty, whom he knew to be the ſole Author of all he had loſt, and to whom he ſtood indebted for the Enjoyment of it hitherto. And can you now, good *Anchithanes*, think it reaſonable to behave your ſelf after a contrary Manner? Ought you not rather to labour, that your preſent Sickneſs may make you the more ſenſible of the true Value of that Health you now want, and the more thankful for the long Enjoyment you have had of it? And what if you are now deprived of it? May not this be for your Good, and ſo far from a Token of God's Diſpleaſure, and a Sign he is irreconcileable to you, that it may be taken from you out of Kindneſs, and ſo may require not your Patience only, but your unfeigned Gratitude for being thus dealt with?

* Biſhop Patrick *on the Words.*

Euſeb. You ought to remember that God is infinitely wiſer than you, and knows what is fitteſt for you, or any of his Servants, far better than you, or they do.

Theoph. There is nothing more common in the World, than for the beſt of Men, and of Chriſtians, to meet with Croſſes and Afflictions whilſt they remain here. This was moſt remarkably notorious during thoſe ſevere Times of Perſecution, wherein ſuch Multitudes of our Lord's Diſciples were called, to ſeal their Profeſſion with their Blood. (*a*) Some were burn'd alive, ſome were ſlain with the Sword, and others were expos'd to ravenous wild Beaſts, and were devour'd by them; and (*b*) even thoſe of the higheſt Rank were tortured, put in Chains, and crucified. Some were baniſhed, ſome had the Soles of their Feet dried up by a gentle Flame, ſome had Torches applied to all Parts of their Bodies, till their Skin cracked and ſhrivel'd up, and the Fire came at length to their very Bowels. (*c*) Some were broiled, ſome empaled, ſome beheaded. (*d*) Some were put in Boats, and turned afloat in the Sea to be drowned. (*e*) Others had their Limbs forced out of Joint, and their Bodies torn with Whips, were pulled in Pieces, were hung up by a Hand, or a Foot, or ſtretched upon the Wrack, or were carbona-

And of the Primitive Chriſtians.

(*a*) Tertull. Scorp. c. 1. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 8. c. 7.

(*b*) Lactant. de Mortibus Perſec. c. 21.

(*c*) Clem. Alex. Str. l. 2.

(*d*) Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 8. c. 6. Sozom. l. 6. c. 14.

(*e*) Euſeb. c. 8. 9, 10, &c. Socrat. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 16.

doed,

doed, and baſted with Salt and Vinegar. In a Word, divers Sorts of unknown Puniſhments were invented for them; and no Age, or Sex were ſpared, but Men, Women, and Children, were all adjudged to the moſt barbarous, moſt abuſive, and moſt painful Deaths. And that they might not be too eaſily diſpatched, the Execution was ſometimes ſtopped in the midſt, and the Martyr remitted to Priſon, not out of Kindneſs, but that having recovered a little Breath, he might be enabled for a new Conflict. And all this meerly for the Sake of their Chriſtianity. Yet were theſe holy Martyrs ſo far from looking upon themſelves as abandoned by God, *becauſe they ſuffer'd ſuch Things*, *that they rejoiced rather and gloried in them, eſteeming it as a Favour that God would call them, in ſo ſignal a Manner, to follow their bleſſed Saviour, and *be baptized with the Baptiſm that he was baptized with*. And in the more quiet and halcyon Times of the Church, it was never known, that the faithfuleſt and beſt Chriſtians were exempt from their Portion of temporal Calamities. When not haraſſed, and perſecuted, and treated as the Refuge *and Offſcouring of all Things*; they have yet been ſubject to Sickneſſes and Diſeaſes, and the other Inconveniencies uſually incident to this State of Mortality and Miſery. So that in them is verified, as it is alſo in the reſt of the World, that *Man that is born of a Woman, hath but a few Days to*

Job. 14. 1.

* Martyr. St. Ignat. c. 2. St. Polycarp. Ep. ad Philip. c. 1. St. Polycarp. Martyr. c. 2. Juſt. Mart. Apol. 1. D. Cypriani Paſſ. & Ep. 30. & 31. Sulpic. Sever. Hiſt. Sacr. An. 304.

live, and full of Trouble; that *he is born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upward*, and that his *Days* are *Evil*, as well as *few*. Mankind in general are all obnoxious to Grievances and Croſſes, and divers Sorts of Diſaſters and Misfortunes; and the good Man amongſt the reſt. Such an one has undoubtedly better Supports under his Troubles, than others have; but he is not totally ſecured from them in his beſt Eſtate. I cannot perſwade my ſelf that his Religion does not entitle him to, and procure for him, divers worldly Bleſſings and Advantages; ſince we all know, *Godlineſs has the Promiſe of the Life that now is*, and not only *of that which is to come*. Beſides that, Religion and a right Government of our ſelves, tends naturally very much to abate and take off the Edge of whatſoever Calamity, and diſpoſes the Sufferer to bear it to the beſt Advantage. But yet ſo long as good Men conſiſt of Fleſh and Blood, no leſs than others, and not only are liable to outward Accidents in like Manner with them, but find themſelves reſtrain'd from divers of thoſe Courſes, for their own Preſervation or Advantage, which others freely allow themſelves to take; no Wonder if they be involved in Wants, and Loſſes, and Misfortunes, and obnoxious to bodily Diſtempers and Infirmities, as their Neighbours are. However, there is no Reaſon to conclude from hence, that they are out of God's Favour, and that their Chaſtiſements argue him to be eſtranged from them; and that they are therefore to hope for no good from him. This is a great Miſtake; and I know not how my Friend *Anchithanes* comes to fall into it. I am ſure you ought rather to reflect upon what the Apoſtle declares, *Heb.* 12. 8. *If ye be with-*

Chap. 5. 7. Gen. 47. 9.

1 Tim. 4. 8.

out Chastisement, whereof all the true and genuine Sons of God *are Partakers, then are ye Bastards, and not Sons.*

Audith. I cannot deny but what you say is agreeable both to Scripture and Reason; and I will therefore consider it, so far as my weak and painful Condition will permit.

Theoph. I am glad to hear you say so. And I pray God *give you a right Understanding in all Things.* But methinks it should be no small Means of settling your Judgment in this Point, to attend a while to what our Lord and Saviour discourses, concerning the rich Glutton in the Gospel, and poor distressed *Lazarus*, who *lay at his Gate* in a helpless Condition, and to remember how mightily the Case was alter'd with them when they came to die. What worldly Advantage was wanting to this rich Man? Did he not enjoy all his Heart could desire? He was rich, was in Health, was finely clad, and kept a plentiful Table, faring *sumptuously every Day*; yet no Friend, no Favourite of God. In the mean Time, *Lazarus* was miserably poor, and knew not where to get a Meals Meat; which made him wait at the Door for some Relief, *desiring to be fed with the Crumbs which fell from the rich Man's Table*, and would have thought it a Happiness if he could have obtain'd them. He was moreover unhealthy and full of Sores, an uneasy Spectacle both to himself and others. But he was nevertheless a good Man, one that like *Job*, *feared God and eschewed Evil*; and who had learned to submit to his hard Circumstances, as well knowing they were order'd him by God. Such was the Difference between them in their mortal State. But this continued not long, before Death came, and set them at a greater

And of the rich Man and Lazarus.

St. Luke 16. 19.

Ver. 20, 21.

greater Diſtance from each other; and then behold a new and a very different Scene opened it ſelf. For this Beggar, as mean and deſpicable as he had been thought, *was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Boſom*, the Place of happy Souls after their Departure out of this Life. The learned Dr. *Lightfoot** teaches, that *it was univerſally believed among the Jews, that pure and holy Souls, when they left this Body, went into Happineſs, to* Abraham, to the ſame Place where he was; and that *our Saviour ſpeaks according to the received Opinion of that Nation in this Affair, when he ſaith many ſhall come from the Eaſt, and from the Weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham.* But this *being carried into* Abraham's *Boſom*, ſeems to denote ſome peculiar Prerogative, ſome greater Happineſs, than a bare Tranſlation into the Place where that Patriarch was. For I take the Phraſe to be of like Importance to what is ſaid of St. *John's* lying in, or *leaning on* our Saviour's *Boſom* at Supper; and ſo to imply in it, an Alluſion to the Manner of Feaſting in thoſe Days; that *Lazarus* was not only with *Abraham*, or in *Abraham's* Bay, as ſome render the Expreſſion, but was ſeated in Glory next to him, ſo as to be ſaid to lie in his *Boſom* at the heavenly Entertainment. *The rich Man alſo died, and was buried.* Here is no Mention of any Angels to take Care of his departing Soul. And certainly he had none to concern themſelves about him, except the infernal Fiends, whom we may reaſonably conclude to have been ready prepared to drag him into the ſame Deſtruction with themſelves. Eſpecially conſi-

Ver. 22.

St. John 13. 23. Ἀνακείμενος ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ.

St. Luke 16. 22.

* In Loc.

dering what follows in the next Words, *And*
St. Luke 16. 23. *in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torments.* An undeniable Proof, that notwithſtanding all the Plenty and Profuſeneſs wherein he had lived, he was far enough from being beloved by God, who had indeed beſtowed all his Wealth upon him, but who withal ſets ſo mean an Eſtimate upon all earthly Advantages, that
Eccl. 9. 1. *no Man knows either Love or Hatred by all that is before him.*

Philog. This Parable makes it very clear, that Want, or Contempt, or Sores, and by Parity of Reaſon, Sickneſſes and Diſeaſes, ſent by God to the good Man, are not to be looked upon as the Effect of his Diſpleaſure and Wrath, but rather as a Sign of his Favour and good Will. At leaſt I am ſure, thus much may be unqueſtionably inferred from it, that no one can be known to be in God's Favour, from *the Abundance of the Things that he poſſeſſes* in this Life; nor any one to be out of his Favour becauſe he has them not beſtowed upon him.

By the Doctrine of the Pſalmiſt.

Euſeb. Very right. But the Pſalmiſt tells us moreover concerning Afflictions, that they are not only no juſt Cauſe of Deſpondency, and Diſtruſt of God's Concern for us; but on the contrary, if rightly improv'd, (and if they be not, that lies at our own Door, and is chargeable only upon our ſelves; if rightly improv'd, I ſay,) they may become highly
Pſal. 94. 12. Beneficial to us. *Bleſſed is the Man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord.* And again, from his own Experience he proclaims the Goodneſs of God, in correcting him for his Miſcarriages, and thereby reducing him to Repentance for them, and a Care to walk more uprightly for the future. *Before I was afflicted, I went aſtray; but now*
Pſal. 119. 67. *have*

have I kept thy Word: And a little after, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes*: And again he makes this Profeſſion, *I know, O Lord, that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in Faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me.* "*It is an Act of thy* Sovereign "Mercy, ſays Dr. *Hammond* upon the Place, "which thou haſt promis'd to make good to "me, to ſend me ſuch Afflictions as theſe. "Theſe are but a neceſſary Part of Diſci- "pline, and ſo a Mercy to me; and having "promiſed not to deny me real and principal "Mercies, thou art obliged in Fidelity to "ſend them. And that they are for our Benefit, and come therefore out of Mercy, and for our Good, the Apoſtle St. *Paul* alſo acquaints us, **When we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord*; not out of Paſſion and Diſpleaſure, and to our own Confuſion, but for our Advantage, and the Promotion of our beſt and trueſt Intereſt, the eternal Salvation of our Souls, *that we ſhould not be condemned with the World.* Our good and gracious God aims at our Reformation and Salvation by his neceſſary Corrections, when he ſees us going aſtray from his Commandments; the proper Intent of them being to make us ſenſible of our Folly and Wickedneſs, and what is like to be the dreadful Conſequence of them, if perſiſted in. And *happy is the Man whom he correcteth; therefore deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Almighty: For he maketh ſore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his Hands make whole.* In a Word, *He is the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort*, and ſo orders his Viſitations, when received as they ought to be; that *he comforts us in all our Tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them, which are in any Trouble, by*

Ver. 71.

Ver. 75.

And of St. *Paul*.

* 1 Cor. 11. 32.

Job 5. 17, 18.

2 Cor. 1. 3, 4.

the Comfort wherewith we our ſelves are comforted of God.

Our Saviour had his Share of them.

Philog. Our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, that ſpotleſs Lamb of God, * *who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth*, enter'd not into Glory, but by the Croſs. So ſays the Apoſtle, † *We ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the Angels, for ſuffering Death, crowned with Glory and Honour.* And it is not very reaſonable for ſuch who profeſs themſelves his Diſciples, to expect that they ſhall attain to the Poſſeſſion of a heavenly Inheritance, by living always in Joy, and Health, and all temporal Felicity; but rather by patiently taking up the Croſs, and thankfully receiving whatſoever it pleaſes God to lay upon them. *The Diſciple is not above his Maſter, nor the Servant above his Lord.* And accordingly our Saviour declares; that *whoſoever doth not bear his Croſs and come after him, cannot be his Diſciple.* Which, though ſpoken with a particular Reſpect to the Caſe of ſuffering Perſecution for his Name and Religion's Sake, will yet hold good in all other Inſtances, whereinſoever it pleaſes God to call us to ſuffer; and amongſt others, *Anchithanes*, when any come to be in the Circumſtances you ſo complain of. Which, how hard ſoever you think them, are nothing like to what our Lord condeſcended to undergo for your Sake, and mine, and all of us.

* 1 St. Pet. 2. 22.

† Hebr. 2. 9.

And ſo muſt his Diſciples.

St. Mat. 10. 24.

St. Luke 14. 27.

Rev. 7. 14.

Euſeb. In St. *John*'s Revelation we read, that thoſe *who are arrayed in white Robes, and are continually before the Throne of God, and ſerve him Day and Night in his Temple, are ſuch as came out of great Tribulation.*

Suffering a proper Means of fitting us for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Theoph. You ſay right. * For ſuch in truth are fitteſt for the Kingdom of God. Neither are the voluptuous Worldlings, who taſt of no

Croſs, but have their Fill of Mirth and Pleaſure, and ſtudy only to gratify their carnal Deſires, ever like to attain to the Joys of Heaven. It is too much to expect that we ſhould live here in a conſtant uninterrupted Enjoyment of all earthly Satisfaction, and yet hereafter be admitted to reign glorioufly with Chriſt in Heaven. *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* And whatſoever therefore tends to withdraw our Affections from theſe tranſitory, deluſive Satisfactions, and in any Meaſure to wean us from the World, and the Things in it, as Afflictions naturally do, is conſequently of great Uſe to us, and we are highly to blame, if we do not improve it to our own Advantage. So that you ſee, my Friend *Anchithanes*, what juſt Occaſion you have to thank Almighty God, that it has pleaſed him ſo far to remember you, as to lay his Hand upon you, to remind you of your own Frailty, and both the Unſatisfactorineſs and Uncertainty of all ſublunary Enjoyments, and to put you upon *ſeeking after a better and an enduring Subſtance*; which having once obtain'd, you will be in no Danger of ever being ſick, or grieved, or tormented, or in Trouble or Want any more. You are alſo to look upon your Sickneſs as a Trial of your Patience, to ſee whether you can bear it as you ought. And I cannot therefore but heartily recommend to you the Advice of the wiſe Son of *Syrach*; *My Son, if thou come to ſerve the Lord, prepare thy Soul for Temptation; ſet thy Heart aright, and conſtantly endure, and make not haſt in Time of Trouble. Cleave unto him, and depart not away, that thou mayeſt be encreaſed at thy laſt End. Whatſoever is brought upon thee, take chearfully, and be patient when thou art changed to a low Eſtate. For Gold is tried in the Fire,*

St. Luke 16. 13.

Eccluſ. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

and acceptable Men in the Furnace of Adverſity.

Anchith. Your Advice I confeſs is good, and I will ſet my ſelf to put it in practice; which I ſhall be the better able to do, becauſe I am ſenſibly affected with what has been ſo plentifully alledged out of the holy Scriptures. Believe me, Sirs, it is a reviving Cordial to my Soul, to hear ſuch plain Evidence from the Word of God, that this Sickneſs which I now labour under may probably be a loving Viſitation of God, and an Inſtance of his Good-will towards me.

And God will turn all to the Good of them that love him. Rom. 8. 28.

Theoph. It is Matter of unfeigned Joy to me, that you have attained to a Conviction of this comfortable Truth. And I beg of you not to doubt, but that your benign and gracious God, and moſt tender and loving Father, who has promiſed, *that all Things ſhall work together for good, to them that love him,* will crown this your Sorrow with Joy and Comfort in the End. 1 Cor. 10. 13. *He is faithful, and will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able; but will with the Temptation alſo make a Way to eſcape* the Overpreſſure of it, *that you may be able to bear it,* without Prejudice to your ſelf, or Diſhonour to the holy Religion you profeſs. Pſal. 30. 5. *His Wrath endureth but the Twinkling of an Eye, and in his Pleaſure is Life; Heavineſs may endure for a Night,* but it ſhall not laſt long, for it is often ſeen, that *Joy cometh in the Morning.* This the Royal Pſalmiſt experimented in his own Caſe, and he held himſelf obliged to own God's Goodneſs in it, and to bleſs him for it. Ver. 12, 13. *Thou,* ſays he, *haſt turned my Heavineſs into Joy; thou haſt put off my Sackcloth, and girded me with Gladneſs. Therefore ſhall every good Man ſing of thy Praiſe without ceaſing; O my*

God,

God, I will give thee Thanks for ever. And at another Time, *Oh what great Troubles and Adverſities haſt thou ſhewed me, and yet didſt thou turn and refreſh me; yea, and broughteſt me from the Deep of the Earth again. Thou haſt brought me to great Honour, and comforted me on every Side, Therefore will I praiſe thee with Faithfulneſs, O God, playing upon an Inſtrument of Muſick: Unto thee will I ſing upon the Harp, O thou holy One of Iſrael.* And again, *They that ſow in Tears, ſhall reap in Joy. He that now goeth on his Way weeping, and beareth forth good Seed, ſhall doubtleſs come again with Joy, and bring his Sheaves with him.* Pſal. 71. 18, 19, 20. Pſal. 166. 6, 7.

Anchith. Amen, Amen, good Lord. I truſt thou wilt deal thus graciouſly with me; who am now dejected and weak, but hope to be again in a better Capacity to ſerve thee.

Theoph. Be not diſcouraged, nor ſuffer your ſelf to queſtion; but that if you *call on the Name of the Lord, you ſhall be deliver'd,* and ſhall find great Comfort. To this End, hear again the Declarations of the foreſaid Royal Prophet, profeſſing what ſingular Manifeſtations of Divine Goodneſs, in this Reſpect, he had Opportunity to obſerve. *The Righteous crieth, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth him out of all his Troubles. The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken Heart; and will ſave ſuch as be of a contrite Spirit. Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his Bones; not one of them is broken. The Lord redeemeth the Soul of his Servants: And none of them that truſt in him ſhall be deſolate.* Joel. 2. 32. Pſal. 34. 17, 18, 19, 20, 22.

Euſeb. Theſe are comfortable Paſſages of Scripture; and if ſeriouſly laid to Heart, muſt needs be of great Uſe to an afflicted Soul; which

which cannot fail of being delighted with the Thoughts of a gracious Divine Providence, continually watching over us for good, that will never be wanting to any of us, unleſs through their own Fault. When Men once forſake God, no Wonder if he forſake them, and leave them to be toſſed about by every Blaſt of an adverſe Fortune, till at length they be overwhelmed with Evils, and ready to ſink under them. But whilſt we duly fear him, and put our Truſt in him, he will let us ſee to our Comfort, that this is the ſureſt Way to get rid of your Burden. So himſelf profeſſes by the Pſalmiſt, *Call upon me in the Day of Trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.* And the Apoſtle St. *Peter* exhorts, to reſt upon him in all our Streights, and Neceſſities, from this Conſideration, that he will not neglect us when we do ſo; *Caſting all your Care upon him, for he careth for you.* He careth for us, and oftentimes works Deliverances, beyond all we could have any Expectation of.

Pſal. 50. 15.

1 St. Pet. 5. 7.

Philog. So that here you ſee, *Anchithanes*, that as Afflictions are no Proof of any one's being out of God's Favour, ſo has he ſhewn himſelf ready to remove them, when fitly applied to to do it.

Anchith. This is comfortable indeed.

Euſeb. But not more comfortable than true, as divers Relations in Scripture plainly teſtify.

Anchith. Will you pleaſe, Sir, to repeat ſome of them, if it be not too much Trouble to you.

Euſeb. Do not think, my Friend, that I can reckon any Service, that is in my Power to do you, troubleſome. It would rather be a great Delight to me. And accordingly I moſt willingly

willingly enter upon what you desire. And to pass over the more ancient Patriarchs, every one knows what Portion was allotted to *Joseph*, both before and after his coming into *Egypt*; yet not for any Fault of his own, but purely to try his Faith, Love, Obedience, Patience, Thankfulness, and Perseverance, and that Deliverance might be wrought for others no less than himself, by his Means. He was not only cast into *the Pit*, without any Provocation given on his Part, except barely the declaring his Dreams, and sold by his Brethren against all Reason and Justice, and natural Affection, into Slavery; but being brought by the *Ishmaelites* into *Egypt*, was sold again to *Potiphar*, an Officer of *Pharaoh*, and Captain of his Guards. And though it were no small Alleviation of such his Captivity, that he found himself in a little Time made Ruler of his Master's House, and entrusted with all his Concerns; yet pray observe what quickly followed. Because he had, as became a faithful Servant of God, a greater regard to his own Virtue, than to the repeated Solicitations of his lustful Mistress, he was falsly accused by her, of having made an Attempt upon her Chastity; and upon this unjust Accusation, not only lost all the Interest he had before in his Master's Favour, but was cruelly thrown into Prison, and kept there for some Years under Confinement. This was a hard Case, for an innocent Man to be forced out of his own Country, made a Slave in a foreign Land, and there wrongfully accused and imprisoned. And who would not have been ready sadly to deplore his unhappy Fate, and the ill Usage he had met with? Yet behold the Result of all this was, that the

The Case of Joseph in Egypt.

Gen. 37. 24.

Ver. 19.

Ver. 28.

Chap. 39. 1.

Ver. 4.

Ver. 7, &c.

Ver. 20.

Mercy

Mercy of God manifeſted it ſelf the more illuſtriouſly, in reſcuing him out of theſe his undeſerved Sufferings. For having found *Joſeph* upon ſo remarkable a Trial to be faithful, conſtant, and patient; he deliver'd him out of Priſon, ſet him at Liberty, and gave him ſuch Favour with King *Pharaoh*, that he appointed him *Ruler over all the Land of Egypt, and put his own Ring upon him, and arrayed him in Veſtures of fine Linnen, and with a Gold Chain about his Neck, made him ride* immediately after himſelf *in the ſecond Chariot that he had*, and cauſed the *Knee to be bowed before him.*

Chap. 41. 40, &c.

Anchith. This I freely acknowledge to be a wonderful Change of Fortune, and a ſingular Mercy of God to his poor afflicted Servant.

Euſeb. See another ſignal Inſtance of God's Goodneſs in this Reſpect. Before King *David* was quietly ſettled in his Kingdom, he met with great Oppoſition and cauſeleſs Perſecution from *Saul*, to whom he always ſhewed himſelf a moſt dutiful and loyal Subject. Inaſmuch that when he had only cut off the Skirt of *Saul's* Garment, in the Cave at *Engedi*, that it might be a Teſtimony of his Reverence to his Lord, whom this ſhewed to have been indubitably in his Power at that Time, if he durſt have offer'd him any Violence; yet even for this *his Heart ſmote him*, and he was uneaſy at ſo ſmall an Indignity done to his Prince, and for ſo plauſible a Reaſon too. So * inviolable did he eſteem the Perſon of his outrageous Sovereign. Yet could

The Caſe of David.

1 Sam. 24. 5.

* Tantam intelligebat Perſonæ ejus eſſe Sanctitudinem. *Grot.* de jure B. ac. P. l. 1. c. 4. VII. 7.

not

not this obtain him his Quiet, but he was driven from Place to Place, to ſave his Life, was *hunted as a Partridge in the Mountains*, (to uſe his own Expreſſion) and never could be at Reſt during the Remainder of *Saul*'s Reign. And again, when it had pleaſed God, without any Inſurrection of his own, to bring him to the Throne, which he would not ſeek to gain before his Time by any unlawful Means, what frequent Diſturbances did he meet with from his undutiful Children? But eſpecially how was he forced, *to fly out of the Land for Abſalom?* And glad that he could eſcape ſo, that he might hope in Time to recover his Kingdom moſt unjuſtly withheld from him. He had this Teſtimony from the Prophet *Samuel*, that *the Lord had ſought him out a Man after his own Heart, and the Lord had commanded him to be Captain over his People.* Yet this hindered not, but that he met with a great deal of Sorrow and Vexation from Time to Time, as well after as before his coming to the Throne. He makes frequent and ſad Complaints of his Misfortunes throughout his Book of *Pſalms*, too many to need that I ſhould trouble you, or our other Friends here with the Repetition of them. Yet did it pleaſe God in his due Time *to turn and refreſh him*, and reſcue him out of his Troubles and Adverſities, *bringing him to great Honour, and comforting him on every Side*, as himſelf relates, and as our good Friend here, *Theophilus*, has noted before me. Thus he continued as long as his natural Strength laſted, and at length being *old and ſtricken in Years, he ſlept with his Fathers, and was buried in the City* called after his own Name, the City of *David*.

1 Sam. 26. 20.

2 Sam. 19. 9.

1 Sam. 13. 14.

Pſal. 71. 18, 19.

1 Kings 1. 1. Chap. 2. 10.

Anchiſth. This ſhews that Almighty God was not regardleſs of him, though he had ſuffered him for good Part of his Life to be under Affliction, and to meet with a large Share of Troubles and Vexations.

1 Sam. 20.

The Caſe of Job farther conſider'd.

Euſeb. But no meer Man was ever to be compared with *Job*, in this reſpect, ſo particularly remarkable was the Method of God's dealing with him in each Eſtate. He was once, as *Theophilus* obſerv'd, *the greateſt Man in the Eaſt*, had Children, and Servants, and Oxen, and Aſſes, Camels, and Sheep in great Plenty, and yet of a ſudden became as poor and naked, as if he had never been Owner of any of them. They were all, as I noted before, taken from him in one Day; and he had nothing left him but his Wife, who inſtead of a Comfort in all his Diſtreſs, proved a Temptreſs to him, and ſo an Addition to all his Miſeries. Beſides all this he was plagued in his own Perſon, to a very great Degree, being ſmitten *with ſore Boils from the Sole of his Foot unto his Crown*; till *he took a Potſherd to ſcrape himſelf withal, and ſate down among the Aſhes*, as a Sign of his exceſſive Grief. He was ſcoffed at likewiſe, and derided upon this ſad Alteration of his Circumſtances; and ſuch as durſt not formerly have looked him in the Face, had now the Confidence to mock and ſneer at him. The very *Youth had him in Deriſion*; and theſe of the meaner Sort too, ſuch *whoſe Fathers he would have diſdained to ſet with the Dogs of his Flock.* And his Friends that came to ſee him in this woful Plight, like *miſerable Comforters*, as they were, inſtead of condoling with him, and pitying his Calamity, and applying fit Lenitives to aſſwage his Anguiſh, and Sorrow of Mind, for ſo ſharp and unexpected a Viſitation, ſet themſelves

Job 1. 3. Ver. 14, &c. Ver. 18. Chap. 2. 9, 10. Ver. 7, 8. Chap. 30. 1. Chap. 16. 2. Chap. 21, &c.

to rebuke him for not following the ſame Advice he had uſed to give to others in Adverſity. They ſpake not a Word of Comfort to him, but endeavoured to perſwade him, that he had Reaſon to ſuſpect his own Sincerity, becauſe ſuch exceſſive Sufferings were not wont to be inflicted upon innocent Perſons, but upon the mercileſs and wicked Oppreſſors, whom, tho' ever ſo Mighty, God had always choſen to humble at one Time or other: They concluded, though very unjuſtly, that all theſe Calamities were ſent upon *Job* for his Miſcarriages, and that he, good Man, muſt needs have been a great Sinner, or otherwiſe he would not have been ſo great a Sufferer. Yet, notwithſtanding all theſe Croſſes, all his Loſſes and Diſappointments, all his Pains and Sores, and all the Diſcouragements he met with from his miſtaken Friends, he ſtill continued ſtedfaſtly to wait God's Pleaſure, in a faithful and reſolute Adherence to his Duty, under all the Difficulties that already had, or might farther befal him. It was his fix'd and ſteady Purpoſe, that *all the Time his Breath was in him, and the Spirit of God was in his Noſtrils, his Lips ſhould not ſpeak wickedly, nor his Tongue utter Deceit*; that *till he died, he would not remove his Integrity from him*; *but his Righteouſneſs he would hold faſt, and not let it go*; *nor ſhould his Heart reprove him as long as he lived.* And *though God ſhould ſlay him*, yet would he perſevere in putting *his Truſt in him.* And to his Wife ſetting her ſelf to ſeduce him from his Uprightneſs, and tempting him to *curſe God and die*, rather than continue to groan under ſuch bitter Sorrows as he had to conflict with, he only replied, that ſhe talked like a vain wicked Woman; piouſly repreſenting to her withal, how unreaſonable it

Chap. 27. 3, 4, 5, 6.

Chap. 13. 15.

Chap. 2. 9.

was to take any Thing ill at God's Hand, and that the more Good any have receiv'd from him, the leſs Reaſon they would have to com-
Job 2. 10. plain of any Ill that might ſucceed it. *Thou ſpeakeſt,* ſays he, *as one of the fooliſh Women ſpeaketh: What, ſhall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and ſhall not we receive Evil? In all this did not Job ſin with his Lips.*

Anchith. O my God, grant me, I beſeech thee, the like Patience.

Philog. Oh! Do not doubt of the Goodneſs of God to you. *Be ſtrong in the Lord,* and wait his Determination with a ſure Truſt in, and intire Reſignation to his good Providence, and he will turn all Things, even what you moſt complain of, to your own Advantage.
Pſal. 27. 16. *O tarry the Lord's Leaſure; be ſtrong, and he ſhall comfort thine Heart; and put thou thy Truſt in the*
Iſ. 30. 15. *Lord. For thus ſaith the Lord God, the holy One of Iſrael. In Returning and Reſt ſhall ye be ſaved, in Quietneſs and Confidence ſhall be your Strength.*
Pſal. 31. 21. *Oh how plentiful is his Goodneſs, which he has laid up for them that fear him; and which he has prepar'd for them that put their Truſt in him, even before the Sons of Men!*

Euſeb. If you pleaſe I will proceed in what I was diſcourſing concerning *Job,* whereby to ſhew the Goodneſs of God to him.

Anchith. I beſeech you do. For though I am not ſo ignorant of the Scripture as not to know it, it will however comfort me to hear it repeated.

Euſeb. After that Almighty God, by divers Sorts of Afflictions, had tried this patient, holy, good, and perfect Man, and had found him in all Reſpects conſtantly and inflexibly Tenacious of his Integrity, in ſpight of all the Plagues that *Satan* could lay upon him,

he * was pleased with and commended him; *the Lord also accepted Job.* And † *the Lord turned the Captivity of Job, also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.* He restored to him all that he had lost; and not only so, but he ceased not, till he had made him twice as rich as ever he had been. Thus *the Lord blessed the latter End of Job, more than the Beginning; for he had Fourteen thousand Sheep, and six thousand Camels, and a thousand Yoke of Oxen, and a thousand She-Asses; he had also Seven Sons, and Three Daughters. And in all the Land were no Women found so fair as the Daughters of Job, and their Father gave them Inheritance among their Brethren. After this lived Job an Hundred and forty Years, and saw his Sons, and his Son's Sons, even Four Generations.*

* Job 42. 8, 9.
† Ver. 10.
Ver. 12, 13, 15, 16.

Anchith. Blessed be God, that he is thus good to his Servants, and does not forsake those that duly put their Trust in him.

Philog. Of this good Man *Job*, St. *James* makes Mention, in Confirmation of the great Truth now treated of. *Ye have heard*, saith the Apostle, *of the Patience of Job, and have seen the End of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender Mercy.*

St. James 5. 11.

Theoph. Thus you see, *Anchithanes*, from the holy Scripture, that corporal Afflictions, of whatever Kind, are no certain Token of God's Anger, but what befals the Righteous as well as others, and from which his truest and best Servants can promise themselves no Exemption. You have heard also of the Loving-kindness of God towards such as have been found faithful upon Trial, and his Readiness to restore them to a more flourishing State than they were in before. Wherefore be not impatient in this your Sickness; but be thankful to

God for it, and ſtudy to make a good Improvement of it. Wait the good Pleaſure of God, and ſuffer him contentedly to diſpoſe of you, as he ſhall determine with himſelf. And then fear not, but he will be merciful to you, and will accompliſh in you, what he in his infinite Wiſdom ſhall ſee fitteſt and moſt proper for you. For *whatſoever Things were written aforetime, were written for our Learning, that we through Patience, and comfort of the holy Scripture, might have Hope.*

Rom. 15. 4.

Anchith. God's Will be done on me. The Lord knows what is propereſt for ſuch a wretched Sinner as I am. *Let him* therefore *do what ſeemeth him good.* Come Life, come Death, I ſhall endeavour to prepare my ſelf for it, that ſo *whether I live, I may live unto the Lord; or whether I die, I may die unto the Lord; ſo whether I live or die, I may be the Lord's.*

1 Sam. 3. 18.

Rom. 14. 8.

A Prayer

A Prayer for Dependance upon God in all Difficulties and Trials.

AND Oh thou my heavenly Father, give me, I most humbly beseech thee for my Saviour's Sake, a patient and a thankful Heart, that I never murmur or be dissatisfied at thy gracious Will, but be obedient to it in all Things; that when my Pains are sharpest, and my Sickness most discouraging, and hardest to be born, I may however lift up my Soul to thee, and seek for Help and Relief from thee alone, calling upon thee as I do at present, saying, O Lord, rebuke me not in thine Indignation, neither chasten me in thy Displeasure. Have Mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak; O heal me, for my Bones are vexed. My Soul also is sore troubled; but, Lord, how long wilt thou punish me. Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my Soul; O save me for thy Mercies sake. Bow down thine Ear, O Lord, and hear me; for I am Poor and in Misery. My God, save thy Servant that putteth his Trust in Thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord, for I will call daily upon thee; comfort the Soul of thy Servant, for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my Soul. For thou, Lord, art good and gracious; and of great Mercy to all them that call upon thee. O remember not the Sins and Offences of my Youth, but according to thy Mercy think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy Goodness. Turn thee unto me, and have Mercy upon me, for I am desolate and in Misery. The Sorrows of my Heart are enlarged; O bring thou me out of my Troubles. Look upon my Adversity

Psal. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Psal. 86. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Psal. 25. 6.

Ver. 15, 16, 17.

Psal. 79 9 and Misery, and forgive me all my Sin. Help me, O God of my Salvation, for the Glory of thy Name; Oh deliver me, and be merciful to my Sins for thy Name's Sake. *I am not worthy the least of all thy Favours; but it is thy Property, O Lord, always to shew Mercy and do Good, to such as have no Way deserv'd it at thy Hand. Thou art my Strength and my Hope: O be thou my mighty Saviour and Deliverer both now and evermore. This I beg for the Sake, and through the Merits and Mediation of my ever blessed Saviour and Redeemer* Jesus Christ *our Lord.* Amen.

The Undutifulness of distrusting God's Providence.

Theoph. Give me leave to tell you, dear *Archithanes*, we are not a little delighted to to find you thus seriously and devoutly disposed, and that you have such a lively Sense of God's gracious over-ruling Providence, and such a comfortable Dependance upon it. Faint not, I beseech you, nor be discouraged, but *be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might.* Be mindful to call upon him continually; and then assure your self, that in all your Afflictions and Troubles he will be your Defence, your impenetrable Shield, your strong Tower, and invincible Fortress. Heb. 13. 5. *He will not leave you, nor forsake you,* but be with you, and assist, support, and comfort you in all your Difficulties. Remember his gracious Promise to such as put their Trust in him, and study to get your Mind seriously affected with it. Psal. 91. 14, 15, 16. *Because he hath set his Love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him up, because he hath known my Name. He shall call upon me, and I will hear him; yea, I am with him in Trouble, and will deliver him, and bring him to Honour. With long Life will I satisfy him, and shew him my Salvation.*

Euseb. To be dissatisfied at Sickness, or any other Affliction, argues great Want of Consideration, and a serious Attendance to the vast Distance that is betwixt God and us, the Relation we stand in to him as our Sovereign Lord and Creator, and the Duty we therefore owe him; which would naturally incline us all to a ready Submission to his most holy Will in all his Determinations concerning us. For nothing can be more highly becoming poor, impotent, needy Creatures, than intirely to resign themselves to their Creator's Disposal. Who, by Vertue of his absolute Dominion over them, may justly assign each one his Work and Station, as well as his Reward, according to his own good Pleasure. And who besides, being infinitely wiser than Man, and loving us much better than we do our selves, must therefore be much fitter to choose what is most advantageous and best for us. And who, as daily Experience shews, is never backward to bestow his Benefits upon us, not only beyond and without our Deserts, but even when we have highly deserved the contrary. *In him we all live, move, and have our Being.* And *he has not left himself without a Witness* of his continual Bounty and Goodness to his Creatures, without Distinction, in that he indiscriminately *does them Good, and gives them Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling their Heart with Food and Gladness.* He continually dispenses such Blessings for the Good of Mankind, as naturally reach not only to his own faithful Servants, but to their Neighbours round about them, who are equally capacitated to partake of them with themselves. And yet, as if this were not express enough, our blessed Saviour tells us positively, that they are designed for

Acts 17. 28.

Acts 14. 17.

the Relief of the Wicked, as well as of the Righteous. For ſpeaking of our *Father which is in Heaven,* he expreſly affirms concerning him, that *he maketh his Sun to riſe on the Evil, and on the Good, and ſendeth Rain on the Juſt, and on the Unjuſt.* So liberal is our good and gracious God of his Mercies and Favours! And ſo conſtantly does he heap them upon ſuch as ſtand in need of them. And can any one that has received his Subſiſtance, and all the good Things he ever enjoyed from God's Bounty murmur, and be diſpleaſed, becauſe he receives ſome Mixture of Evil and Sorrow with them?

St. Mat. 5. 45.

Theoph. The Conſideration of God's Sovereignty tied up *David's* Tongue, when under great Affliction, at the Proſperity of his Enemies, and moſt probably of his rebellious Son *Abſalom,* and his Accomplices: *I was dumb,* ſays he, *I opened not my Mouth.* And then follows the Reaſon of this his Silence and Submiſſion, *Becauſe thou didſt it.* Becauſe it was the Hand of God by which he ſuffered, this he readily acknowledged a ſufficient Cauſe of his Acquieſcence in it, how hard ſoever in it ſelf. "What is "befallen me, ſays Dr. *Hammond* upon the "Place, I am far from repining or murmu"ring at: It comes, I know, from thee, "whoſe Diſpoſals are moſt wiſe; and be it "never ſo ſharp, I am ſure I have well deſer"ved it. And there is no Reaſon why Chriſtians ſhould not be equally ſubmiſſive to the Divine Will in all Caſes, ſeeing not only God has the ſame Authority over us with thoſe that were before us; but we have been bleſſed with ſuch peculiar Bleſſings, as the World had before had in Hope and Proſpect only, and the Promiſes whereof were never actually compleated

Pſal. 39. 9.

pleated till our Saviour's Incarnation. Which makes our Ingratitude and Diſſatisfaction the more abominable, and calls upon us therefore the more readily to ſubmit to the Divine Will in all Caſes; whatſoever Portion of Sufferings may be allotted us.

Timoth. There is another very weighty Reaſon why we ſhould thus give up our ſelves to the divine Diſpoſal; and that is, becauſe of our own Demerits. For be our Afflictions ever ſo grievous, or our Wants ever ſo pinching, it muſt be owned to the Glory of God, that he is ſtill gracious to us, and has *puniſhed us leſs than our Iniquities have deſerved.* And this may well teach us Silence, leſt our Diſſatisfactions for leſſer Sufferings prevail, to the bringing down ſome heavier Calamity upon us. This is a Caſe wherein *every Mouth muſt be ſtopped, and all the World become guilty*, highly guilty *before God*, if his infinite Patience towards them, and the numerous undeſerved Benefits he loads them with, do not outweigh thoſe lighter Corrections they at any Time ſmart under. There is none but if he would ſeriouſly examine his own Conſcience, will immediately diſcover ſuch a Maſs of Wickedneſs there, as moſt inevitably convince him, that how hard ſoever his Caſe be, he has yet abundant Cauſe to admire and magnify the infinite Clemency of God towards him, in not having far more ſeverely avenged himſelf upon ſo guilty a Sinner. And it is intolerable Ingratitude for him to complain of the Loſs only of one Joint of a Finger, when he has deſerved to loſe his Hand, or rather to be uneaſy at the cutting off his Hair, when inſtead thereof he had juſtly forfeited his Head.

The Unreaſonableneſs of being diſſatisfied at God's Dealings with us.

Sick. And if you enquire farther into the Reaſonableneſs of theſe Complaints, you will ſoon ſee the ill Management that is in them, amongſt others, eſpecially upon theſe Two Accounts. Firſt, becauſe a patient Compliance with the Divine Will is the beſt Way the Sufferer can take to make himſelf eaſy under his Sufferings, whether Sickneſs, or of any other Kind. It is not neceſſary to turn a *Stoick* to experiment the Truth of this. A Man may ſoon find the Benefit of ſuch a Deportment, in abating the Pungency of his Diſtemper, though he has not brought himſelf to ſuch a ſenſeleſs Degree of Affectation, * as to proclaim himſelf happy in *Phalaris*'s Bull. For a truly Chriſtian Patience, ſuch as *Lipſius* † deſired at the Time of his Death, is the beſt Remedy we have at Hand; which, though it will not remove our Sufferings, will however be very Uſeful for taking off the Edge of them, and making them the more tolerable. Whilſt on the other Hand, Impatience makes a great Addition to any Evil that befals us, by our Unfitneſs to bear it; *non quia dura, ſed quia molles patimur*, not ſo much from the Weight of the Affliction, as from our own Weakneſs and Diſability to ſtand under the Burden of it. Such as are querulous

* Sapiens inquit Epicurus, ſemper beatus eſt, & vel inclusus in Phalaridis Tauro hanc vocem emittet ſuave eſt, & nihil curo. *Lactant. Inſtit. l.* 3. *c.* 27.

† Cum ſolatia Sociis magnam illi Materiam ſupereſſe quiſpiam ei ſuaderet. Illa, inquit, vana, reſpondit, digito in Chriſti crucifixi imaginem prope aſtantem intento, hæc eſt, inquit, vera Patientia: Mox magno Spiritu ſubjecit, Domine Jeſu, da mihi Patientiam Chriſtianam. *Drexel. de Æternit. Conſid.* 4.

querulous and discontented, and upon the Fret at every Misfortune they meet with, take the ready Way to make themselves miserable; at least much more so than they would otherwise have been. When as it is easy to observe of those who are never dissatisfied howsoever it pleases God to dispose of them, that if they cannot be said to be truly happy in their worst Condition, yet it cannot be denied that they are so in Comparison of what these others would be in the like Circumstances. This therefore is one unanswerable Reason, why every one should compose himself to bear his Afflictions to the best Advantage, I mean with an unwearied Patience and Resignation to God's most holy Will. The other I intended to mention is, Secondly, because we know not whether what we wish removed be a real Cause of Grief or not, and whether it be not rather designed as a Kindness, and like to prove so in the Event, as being introductive of some greater Good, whether Temporal or Eternal, than the Sufferer would otherwise have attained to. We poor short-sighted Mortals are very apt to mistake our Friends for our Enemies, and to think our selves hardly dealt with, when the greatest Kindness is intended us, and hence inexcuseably complain of the Usage we meet with; and this not only in relation to one another, but to the Determinations of the Divine Providence concerning us; when a little Time convinces us, that our own Choice, if granted, would have left us in a far worse Condition.

Philog. That must needs be, unless we were capable of foreseeing all the Events of God's Dispensations towards us, and could penetrate into his Aim and Intent in them. *His Ways are* Is. 55. 8, 9.

not as our Ways, nor his Thoughts as our Thoughts. For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth; ſo are his Ways higher than our Ways, and his Thoughts than our Thoughts. And for not attending to this, the *Iſraelites* were deſervedly to be chaſtiſed, as the Prophet *Ezekiel* threatened them; *Yet ſaith the Houſe of Iſrael, the Way of the Lord is not equal. O Houſe of Iſrael, are not my Ways equal? Are not your Ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O Houſe of Iſrael, every one according to his Ways, ſaith the Lord God.* And every one therefore ought to beware that he fret not at God's Diſpoſal of him, as he would not incur the like Rebuke, together with the heavy Puniſhment that may juſtly be expected to follow upon it.

Ezek. 18. 29, 30.

Euſeb. As this Way of cenſuring God's Dealings with his Servants is impious, ſo I add that it is highly unreaſonable, upon another Account. For the Cenſurer knows not, whether what he moſt diſlikes will not prove a Bleſſing to him in the End; as neither on the other Hand, whether what he moſt impatiently deſires, if obtain'd, may not, in the Event, become a ſore Misfortune to him. It was * *Rachel*'s Complaint, that ſhe muſt die of Grief and Diſcontent, if ſhe had no Children. And yet the Accompliſhment of her Deſire in this Reſpect was the certain Occaſion of her Death. For tho' ſhe bare one Son *Joſeph* with Safety, yet no ſooner was ſhe the Mother of Children by the Birth of *Benjamin*, but it coſt her her Life. And on the contrary, who would ever have thought that her Son *Joſeph*'s Slavery and Impriſonment in *Egypt*, ſhould have been the Means of advancing him to the ſecond Place in that Kingdom? Yet this it moſt certainly was. Who would have imagined

* *Give me Children, or elſe I die.* Gen. 30. 1. Ver. 23.

Chap. 35. 18.

Chap. 41. 41, 42, 43.

gined that *Moſes* ſhould be taken up by *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, and educated and owned by her as a Son, by having been expoſed to the Water and the Waves in the *Nile*? Or that * *Bion* ſhould have got an Eſtate by being ſold into Slavery? Or † *Themiſtocles*'s Exile ſhould have procured his Advancement, in a foreign Court, and given Occaſion for that triumphant Profeſſion of his, Ὦ παῖδες ἀπολώμεθα ἂν εἰ μὴ ἀπωλόμεθα, *O my Children, if we had never been ruined, we had been utterly undone.* Exod. 2. 10.

Theoph. It cannot be denied that Mankind are oftentimes egregiouſly Miſtaken, in their Conceptions in relation to the Diſtributions of Providence, and their impatient, either Deſires, or Averſations make them chooſe very diſadvantageouſly, too often deſtructively, to themſelves. As might be confirmed by many Inſtances, beſides thoſe now produced by *Euſebius*, had not theſe been ſufficient of themſelves. However, poſſibly it may not be amiſs, to illuſtrate this by an ingenious Apologue; Metaphors and Parables many Times making a more laſting Impreſſion upon the Mind, than the cloſeſt and moſt demonſtrative Arguments.

Philog. I dare anſwer for all the Company, that what you propoſe will be very acceptable and obliging to them. And let me therefore beg that you will pleaſe to proceed.

Anchith. Pray do. And I will give a due Attention to it; as I have done to all that *Euſebius*, or any of you, has ſaid upon this Subject.

* Diog. Laert. in vit. Bionis.
† Plut. in vit. Themiſt.

Theoph.

Theoph. There is a notable Story in the Writings of a late learned and reverend Doctor of our Church, that ſtrikes my Fancy in an unuſual Manner; and I hope therefore it will not be diſagreeable to any of you.

Philog. Pray let us have it. You do not know what Impreſſion it may make upon *Anchithanes*, or how much you may oblige any other of us by it.

Theoph. I will give you the beſt Account of it I can at this Time. So many Years have paſſed ſince I read it, that I will not pretend to be exact in my Rehearſal of it; but I am pretty Confident I ſhall not forget any Thing material in it, however I may poſſibly wrong it in the Manner of telling. The Story, in ſhort, is this: "* A certain *Eremite*, not well ſatisfied with the Adminiſtration of this World and its Affairs, and the divers Occurrences of divine Providence in relation to it, reſolved in this Diſorder of Mind to quit his Cell, and travel abroad to view the Courſe of Things, and make what Obſervations he could, whereby to form a Judgment of what had thus diſturbed him. But he had not gone far, not above Half a Day's Journey, if I remember aright, before he was overtaken by a young Stranger, who came up to him, and joined Company with him, who quickly inſinuated himſelf ſo far into the *Eremite*'s Affection, that he thought himſelf very happy in having ſo ſoon met with ſo ſuitable a Companion. And as their Journey lay the ſame Way,

A Parabolical Story.

* Dr. *H. More*'s divine Dialogues. To. 1. Dial. 1. Sect. 24.

"they

" they agreed together to eat and lodge al-
" ways at one House, whersoever they
" came. Some few Days they had travelled,
" before the *Eremite* took Notice of any Thing
" that occurred Worthy of his Observation.
" But at length he could not but be concern'd
" to see that at a House where they were
" very kindly and generously entertain'd, his
" Fellow-Traveller, with whom, in this Time,
" he had contracted an intimate and endear-
" ing Friendship, at his Departure stole a gilt
" Cup, and took it away with him. This
" was Matter of no small Astonishment to the
" poor *Eremite*, that his Friend whom he so
" highly esteemed, and whom he thought a
" truly sincere Christian, should prove guilty
" of such apparent Theft, and inexcusable
" Ingratitude, to one who had been so highly
" civil to them, and to whom therefore they
" had particular Obligations. And he was
" resolved to see farther what his Behaviour
" would be in other Places, before he enqui-
" red any Thing concerning it. Wherefore
" on they went as before, till at Night they
" met with a House of as ill Accommodations
" as the former was of good; where the Own-
" er being a Man of a morose inhospitable
" Temper, refus'd to admit them within
" Doors, though the Rain and other hard
" Weather made such a Reception very de-
" sirable. So that they were forced to spend
" that Night in the open Court, in Hardship
" and great Uneasiness, and not without some
" Hazard of their Health. Yet such was the
" different Carriage of this young Traveller
" towards this unmerciful surly Man, than in
" the Morning he rewarded all his Inhuma-
" nity with this gilt Cup, which he thrust in-

" to

" to one of the Windows, and there left it. " This you may eaſily ſuppoſe was a Sight no " leſs ſurprizing to the *Eremite* than the for- " mer; and he could not poſſibly fathom " the Myſtery of ſo unequal a Procedure. " However, he ſtill took no Notice of it to " his Companion, though he could not for- " bear ruminating upon it in his Thoughts. " The next Night they were treated with the " like Civility and Kindneſs, as at the Houſe " from whence the Cup was taken; but the " Return made for all their good Entertain- " ment was far worſe than the former, and " more aſtoniſhing. For at their leaving the " Place, the *Eremite* ſaw his Companion pri- " vately ſtrangle a little Child as it lay in the " Cradle, the only Child of the Family, and " of which both Father and Mother were ex- " ceedingly fond, and in whom all their tem- " poral Happineſs ſeem'd to be wrap'd up. " However, he prevail'd with himſelf to hold " on another Day, and at Night they came " to a Houſe of the beſt Entertainment they " had met with yet. Where the Maſter of the " Houſe not only received them with the high- " eſt Civility, and accommodated them with " whatever might either ſupport or divert " them during their ſhort Stay there; but in " the Morning, becauſe the Way they were " to go was ſomewhat intricate, prevailed " with them to accept of a Guide, a Servant " whom he had found very faithful and dili- " gent, and whom he therefore loved and va- " lued, as if he had been his own Child. " Thus they took their Journey for a while; " till coming to a Bridge that croſſed a deep " and rapid Stream, the young Traveller of " a ſudden laid violent Hands upon the Ser-

" vant,

"vant, and threw him over into the Water,
"and drowned him. Upon this the *Eremite*
"could contain no longer, but passionately
"charged the other with his barbarous Re-
"quitals for the Favours they had received
"by the Way, and the Injustice and Murder
"he had been guilty of, resolving to keep no
"more Company, nor ever have any Thing
"more to do with the Author of such abo-
"minable Wickedness, choosing much rather
"to confine himself again to his Cell, and
"forbear the Conversation of Mankind, than
"see such heinous Crimes committed without
"any Remorse, as if they were never to be
"accounted for. But now, behold as strange
"a Sight of another Kind! The young Man
"smiling at the honest Zeal of the good de-
"vout *Eremite*, and putting off his mortal
"Disguise, appeared to him in the Form and
"Lustre of an Angel of God, telling him
"that he was sent to ease his Mind, of the
"Perplexity and Doubts he had so long la-
"boured under as to the divine Providence.
"In which, said he, nothing can occur more
"astonishing or unaccountable than in what
"you have now seen, and are so uneasy at.
"With this the good Man took Courage, and
"resolved not to part with his Companion
"till he should have learned the Meaning of
"what had passed so much to his Distur-
"bance. And the other immediately pro-
"mised to demonstrate to him, that in Rea-
"lity nothing could be more just and equi-
"table than all this, which for want of a
"right Understanding, had been so great
"and almost insuperable an Offence to him.
"For, said he, As to the First Man from whom
"the gilded Cup was taken, he had the best

"Compensation

" Compenſation made him for all his Kind-
" neſſes, the Cup having been an unhappy
" Occaſion of great Miſchief to him whilſt
" he had it. He is a Perſon of divers excel-
" lent Qualifications, and exceedingly belo-
" ved amongſt his Neighbours, who are con-
" tinually partaking of his Bounty and Friend-
" ſhip. But he has one Failing that tarniſhes
" all his good Deeds, and that is an Inclina-
" tion to Company and Drinking more than
" becomes him, and eſpecially whenever this
" Cup was brought forth; ſo that the beſt
" Office I could do him was effectually to re-
" move this Temptation out of the Way, that
" by this Means he may be brought to a bet-
" ter Government of himſelf; which is the
" greateſt Happineſs that can befall him in
" this World, and moſt highly Beneficial in
" order to another. For this Reaſon I took
" Care to eaſe this our worthy Friend of what
" had been ſo unfortunate a Snare to him.
" And I left it with the other rough, moroſe,
" inhoſpitable Man, as a Means of his De-
" ſtruction, and ſo a juſt Reward of all his
" Inhumanity, that by it he may fall into In-
" temperance, Diſeaſes, and Death itſelf;
" there being that Enchantment in this Cup,
" that whoſoever hath it will be in Danger
" of being thus bewitched by it. But per-
" haps you are at a ſtand to think of the little
" innocent Babe ſo unexpectedly ſtrangled in
" the Cradle, and at a Place too where we
" had been ſo civilly entertained. Know then
" that this was done in great Mercy to the
" Parents, and no real Hurt to the Child,
" who is now with God in Bliſs and Happi-
" neſs. This Gentleman and his Wife had
" hitherto lived in great Reputation for their

" Piety,

" Piety, Juſtice, ſobriety, and other Chri-
" ſtian Virtues. But above all, their Charity
" was moſt conſpicuouſly Eminent, divers of
" their infirm and indigent Neighbours ow-
" ing their Subſiſtence, next under God, to
" their Beneficence. But ſince the Birth of
" this Child, their Minds have by Degrees
" degenerated and ſunk into a Love of this
" World, and inſtead of providing for the
" Poor and Helpleſs, as formerly, their
" Thoughts have been employed how to en-
" rich themſelves, and leave a plentiful For-
" tune to this Infant and its Poſterity. Hence
" it was that I took away this momentary
" Life from the Body of the Child, that the
" Souls of the Parents might live for ever.
" And I appeal to your ſelf, whether all
" Things conſider'd, this was not an immenſe
" Kindneſs, and an Act of the trueſt Friend-
" ſhip to them. But ſtill there remains one
" Thing more to be accounted for, this laſt
" Fact, againſt which you have declar'd ſuch
" a violent Deteſtation. And as bad a Notion
" as you have of it, this, let me tell you, was
" the moſt faithful Inſtance of Gratitude I
" could pay, to one who had uſed us with the
" utmoſt Humanity and Kindneſs. For this
" Servant, whom his Maſter ſo highly va-
" lued, was a very Rogue, and was in a Con-
" ſpiracy to have this very Night let in a
" Company of Thieves to rob and kill his
" Maſter, and perhaps his whole Family.
" Which having ſaid, he immediately vaniſh-
" ed, left the good Man to meditate with
" himſelf upon what had paſſed, and the
" Reaſons given for it. Who hereupon tranſ-
" ported with Joy and Amazement, lifted up
" his Hands and Eyes to Heaven, and gave

" Glory to God, who had thus unexpectedly " deliver'd him from any farther Anxiety " touching the Ways of his Providence. And " being now fully ſatisfied as to the Wiſdom " of all God's Dealings with us, and thoſe un- " ſeen Reaſons of them, which ſo far ſurpaſs " the Bounds of our finite ſhallow Under- " ſtandings, he returned with Chearfulneſs " to his forſaken Cell, and ſpent the Reſidue " of his Days there in Piety and Peace.

Philog. It is an excellent Story indeed, *Theophilus*, and ſo much to the Purpoſe, that nothing could be more.

Euſeb. This ſhews beyond all Contradiction how ſhort-ſighted we poor Mortals are, and how unable to judge of the Aim and Intent of the Divine Diſpenſations towards either our ſelves or others. We are apt to think our ſelves very wiſe; but, alas! ſhould God ſee fit to leave us but a very little Time to our own Management and Choice, we ſhould quickly ſee Cauſe to bewail our Folly, and beg, and pray, and entreat of him, to take the Care of us again into his Hand. We think our ſelves, with *Phaeton*, able to govern the Chariot of the Sun, but if entruſted with it, ſhould ſoon find the Effect of our Preſumption, as he did of his, to be only Ruin and Deſtruction. As alſo on the other Hand, when we think our ſelves in the moſt forlorn Circumſtances, we yet know not what Bleſſings are reſerved for us, and how even theſe our Calamities may be made a Step and Introduction to them.

Anchith. You ſay very true, *Euſebius*: And *Theophilus*'s Story has ſo clearly illuſtrated the Matter, that I moſt heartily return him my Thanks for it.

Theoph. I am very glad to hear this from you, becauſe I was afraid I had quite tired you with it; eſpecially ſince coming at the latter End of the Day, when you might be preſumed deſirous to be left to your ſelf. But now it is Time for us to retire, and wiſh you a good Night's Reſt, and that you may find no Inconvenience by the long Diſturbance we have given you.

Anchith. Pray, good *Theophilus*, let me entreat you by no Means to think that a Diſturbance to me, which I frankly acknowledge to have been a Favour and a Kindneſs.

Euſeb. I hope you will pardon us, if we have made too bold with you, conſidering your preſent Indiſpoſition, ſince you know we could have no other Deſign in it but to ſerve you.

Anchith. Indeed, Gentlemen, I cannot think of parting with you yet. I am very ſenſible of the Kindneſs of this charitable Viſit, and own my ſelf to be highly obliged to you for it. And I muſt confeſs, I find my ſelf refreſh'd and enliven'd to a great Degree by your uſeful and inſtructive Diſcourſe ever ſince you came, and your ſeaſonable Application of ſo many Paſſages of Scripture to my Circumſtances; for which I heartily thank you all: Yet this I muſt add, that I am much afraid leſt the Application belong not to me. For I dare by no Means compare my ſelf to thoſe famous Worthies you have been mentioning, *Joſeph*, *David*, and *Job*: Theſe were illuſtrious Servants of God, and eminently Religious in their Generations; whereas my Conſcience tells me, that I being a poor, wretched, guilty Sinner, who from Time to Time have highly offended my good and gracious God, can have

no Title to thoſe Promiſes which were made to ſuch as theſe, nor any juſt Ground to expect the like favourable Uſage with them. Theſe holy Men were afflicted out of pure Kindneſs and Mercy, for the Vindication of their Faith and Conſtancy, and that they might appear noble Examples of an unwearied Fidelity to thoſe that ſhould come after them. But alas! What am I, poor Creature, that the Lord, whom I have ſo provok'd, ſhould have any Regard for me? This uncomfortable Reflection damps my Joy, and robs me of that ineſtimable Satisfaction, I muſt needs otherwiſe have found, in what you have ſo pertinently ſuggeſted. Not that I do now doubt in the leaſt of God's Goodneſs to his faithful Servants, but only that I ſee too much Cauſe to diſtruſt my own Qualification for his Favour. The beſt of my Performances have been ſo lame and imperfect, and the whole Courſe of my Life has been ſo defil'd, with blacker, and too too oft with wilful and known Sins, that I have too much Reaſon to ſuſpect this Sickneſs to be laid upon me, as a Puniſhment for ſuch my Guilt. And I cannot perceive why you ſhould not alſo be of the ſame Opinion.

Euſeb. Admit it; Yet you have no Reaſon to conclude it ſent only for this End.

Pardon promis'd to all true Penitents.

Philog. It is not above a Fortnight or Three Weeks, ſince I heard our Doctor preaching upon theſe Words, *Rom.* 4. 7. *Bleſſed are they whoſe Iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe Sins are cover'd.* And what he ſaid made ſuch an Impreſſion upon me, that I could not forget it, and I hope I never ſhall: His Diſcourſe was, as you may eaſily ſuppoſe, concerning Remiſſion of Sins. And he ſhewed us, *Firſt*, That it is God alone who forgives Sins; he can

and

and does forgive them when he ſees juſt Occaſion for it, and he alone can do it. *Secondly*, That Chriſt is the only meritorious Cauſe of this Forgiveneſs; and it is purely through his Mediation that we can hope to obtain it. *Thirdly*, That however ſuch a Faith in him as produces a true and unfeigned Repentance on our Part, is requir'd as an abſolute indiſpenſable Condition of this Forgiveneſs. And here he made theſe Two farther Obſervations: *First*, That without Repentance there is no Hope of Pardon, even though a Man had not fallen into groſs and ſcandalous Sins, but only gone on in the heedleſs Neglect of his Duty, like the fooliſh Virgins in our Saviour's Parable, or the unprofitable Servant, who hid his Maſter's Talent in a Napkin. And then, *Secondly*, That though a Man had been a great Sinner, yet upon a true Repentance he might promiſe himſelf Forgiveneſs. Though he had been guilty of groſs and enormous Crimes, (*Such as we can none of us conceive*, Anchithanes, *to have ever been guilty of*;) yet upon his forſaking them, his Sight of, and Sorrow for them, and a Care to walk more uprightly for the future, together with a ſerious and ſteady Dependence upon God's Mercy, through the Merits and Interceſſion of our bleſſed Redeemer, God will be reconciled to him, and will own him for his faithful Diſciple and Servant. And at laſt he concluded with theſe comfortable Words, worthy to be written in Letters of Gold, and ſet up in all Places, that every one may have them continually in his Eye, and which particularly ſuit *Anchithanes*'s Caſe, that *HEAVEN GATES ARE NOT SHUT AGAINST THOSE THAT FALL INTO SIN, BUT AGAINST THOSE THAT LIVE IN IT.*

St. Mat. 25, 3, &c. *Ver.* 24, 25.

Euſeb. Excellently ſpoken by the Doctor, and now as pertinently remember'd by *Philogeiton.*

Theoph. There is nothing more plain, in the whole Word of God, than that Repentance and Forgiveneſs of Sins are inſeparable Companions, and he that has the one as he ought, ſhall be ſure not to miſs of the other. To this Purpoſe ſpeaks God himſelf by the Prophet *Iſaiah, Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the Evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes. Ceaſe to do Evil, learn to do well, ſeek Judgment, relieve the Oppreſſed, judge the Fatherleſs, plead for the Widow.* And then, as the happy Effect of ſuch a Change, he adds, *Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: Though your Sins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as Snow; tho' they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as Wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye ſhall eat the Good of the Land.* And again, *Let the Wicked forſake his Way, and the Unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* And by the Prophet *Ezekiel, When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his Soul alive. Becauſe he conſidereth, and turneth away from all his Tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die.* And again to the ſame Purpoſe, *When I ſay to the Wicked, Thou ſhalt ſurely die: If he turn from his Sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the Wicked reſtore the Pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the Statutes of Life without committing Iniquity: He ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die. None of his Sins that he hath committed ſhall be mention'd unto him: He hath done that which is lawful and right;*

Iſ. 1. 16, 17.

Ver. 19, 20.

Chap. 55. 7.

Ezek. 18. 27, 28.

Chap. 33. 14, 15, 16.

he ſhall ſurely live. And in the New Teſtament, *Repent ye,* ſays St. *Peter, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out.* And at another Time, ſpeaking of our bleſſed Saviour, *Him,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *hath God exalted with his right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give Repentance to Iſrael, and Forgiveneſs of Sins.* And to omit divers other Places. *There is Joy in Heaven,* ſays our Saviour, *over one Sinner that repenteth, more than over Ninety and nine juſt Perſons that need no Repentance.* Acts 3. 19. Chap. 5. 31. St. Luke 15. 7.

Faith and Repentance often mean the ſame Thing.

Euſeb. There is nothing more evident, than that Pardon and Salvation are promis'd in the Goſpel, ſometimes to Faith, and ſometimes to Repentance; both which therefore ſeem to me, in the Scripture-language, to mean oftentimes the ſame Thing. For a true Faith is ſuch a Belief in Chriſt, and Dependence upon him for Salvation, as produces a ſincere and unfeigned Repentance. And a ſaving Repentance is ſuch as proceeds from a Belief in Chriſt, and is accompanied with a Hope of Salvation through him alone. Such a Faith therefore, or ſuch a Repentance, call it whether you will, is recommended to us by our Saviour and his Apoſtles, as a moſt neceſſary Qualification for Mercy and Pardon here, and eternal Felicity hereafter.

Humiliation a good Sign of Repentance.

Theoph. Wherefore, dear *Anchithanes,* it is worthy your ſerious Conſideration, whether this Senſe of your own Unworthineſs in the Eyes of God, be not an Argument of a Penitent Heart, *a meek and quiet,* an humble and reſigned Spirit, *which is in the Sight of God of great Price.* It is true, no Man is pure and undefil'd before God, there being (a) *none Righteous* in this Senſe, *no not one.* (b) *Who can ſay, I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin?* It is a melancholick Conſideration for the beſt of Men, that (c) *in many Things we offend all.* 1 St. Pet. 3. 4. (a) Rom. 3. 10. (b) Prov. 20. 9. (c) St. Jam. 3. 2.

(d) 1 St. Jo. 1. 8. (d) *If we ſay we have no Sin, we deceive our ſelves, and the Truth is not in us.* (e) *For all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the Glory of God.* So (e) Rom. 3. 23. that (f) *there is not a juſt Man upon Earth, who doth Good and ſinneth not.* (g) *By one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and ſo Death paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned.* (f) Eccl. 7. 20. (g) Rom. 5. 12. We are all of us at beſt (h) but *unprofitable Servants*; and ſhould have ſtill been ſo, tho' we had been able to perform all *that is commanded us*; for ſo *we had done but what was our Duty to do.* But I would to God this were the true State of the Caſe, that we had done no more than was incumbent upon us, as neceſſary Duty. It is ſad to think on the contrary; we are ſo far from having done this, that none of us but has Multitudes of Sins of Commiſſion to be accounted for, for which, *if God will contend with us, not one of us can anſwer him,* or excuſe himſelf *for One of a Thouſand.* It was the peculiar Prerogative of our great High-Prieſt, the ever bleſſed *Jeſus* to have been *tempted in all Points like as we are,* and *yet* to have paſſed his whole Life *without Sin.* *All Fleſh* beſides have *corrupted their Way before God.* And *if he ſhould be extream to mark what were done amiſs, none could abide it; nor ſhould any Man living be juſtified in his Sight.* Conſider with your ſelf the Weakneſs and Infirmity of humane Nature, and how prone all are to go aſtray from their Duty, and you will preſently ſee Reaſon enough for that Expoſtulation of *Bildad, How can Man,* the beſt and moſt upright of Men, conſider'd in himſelf, without the Mediation of a Saviour, how can he *be juſtified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a Woman? Behold even to the Moon, and it ſhineth not; yea, the Stars are not pure in his Sight;*

(h) St. Lu. 17. 10. Hebr. 4. 15. Gen. 6. 12. Pſ. 130. 3. Pſ. 143. 2. Job 25. 4, 5, 6.

Sight; having no Brightneſs or Luſtre in his Preſence. *How much leſs Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man that is a Worm.* We have all abundant Reaſon to pray with the humble Publican, *Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner*; and in the Words our bleſſed Lord has put into our Mouths, to ſupplicate and beſeech Almighty God of his infinite Mercy to *forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.* St. Luke 18. 3. St. Mat. 6. 12.

Euſeb. If you look back to thoſe very Worthies I took Occaſion to mention to you, how oft does *David*, the Man after God's own Heart, confeſs himſelf a grievous Sinner? How does he flee to God, and humble himſelf at his Footſtool, and ſue, and beg, and pray, and entreat for the Forgiveneſs of his manifold Iniquities? How does he diſclaim all Confidence in himſelf, and betake himſelf only to the Mercy and Goodneſs of God, for Acceptance with him? To inſtance in Particulars to this Purpoſe, would be to repeat a great Part of his Book of *Pſalms*, which are full of Expreſſions of this Nature, from one End to the other. But theſe being not only in every one's Hand, as the reſt of the Bible, but being order'd by our Church to be read over every Month, in its publick Service, I will not ſuſpect any one here, ſo little acquainted with this ſeraphick Part of the holy Scripture, as to need being put in Mind, of what is ſo plainly and fully contain'd in it. And *Job*, on whom God had beſtow'd ſo glorious a Character, in the Two firſt Chapters of his Hiſtory, yet durſt not pretend to inſiſt upon his own Innocence, but only upon the Clemency of God, for Safety. *If I juſtify my ſelf*, ſays he, *my own Mouth ſhall condemn me; if I ſay I am perfect,* Job. 9. 20.

perfect, it ſhall prove me perverſe. And a little after, *I am afraid of all my Sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain? If I waſh my ſelf with Snow-Water, and make my Hands never ſo clean, yet ſhalt thou plunge me in the Ditch, and my own Cloths ſhall abhor me.* Wherefore, good *Anchithanes*, take Heart, and do not deſpond by reaſon of your paſt Tranſgreſſions. Let not *Satan* tempt you to deſpair, as if there were no Mercy for you, and you had no longer any Right to God's Promiſes; but ſeek rather to make out your Title to them, by humbling your ſelf in his Preſence, with unfeigned Purpoſes and Reſolutions of a better Obedience for the future, ſo far as ever you ſhall be able. Confeſs and bewail your Wickedneſs, and pray for Pardon and Forgiveneſs, through the prevailing Merits of our moſt compaſſionate and all-powerful Redeemer. And aſſure your ſelf, ſuch your Petitions *ſhall not return unto you void, but ſhall accompliſh* your Deſires, and *proſper in the Thing whereto you ſend them.* For *the Lord is gracious and merciful, long-ſuffering, and of great Goodneſs. The Lord is loving unto every Man, and his Mercy is over all his Works. The Lord is full of Compaſſion and Mercy, long-ſuffering, and of great Goodneſs. He will not always be chiding, neither keepeth he his Anger for ever. His merciful Goodneſs endureth for ever and ever upon them that fear him: And his Righteouſneſs upon Childrens Children. Oh truſt in the Lord, for with the Lord is Mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption; and he ſhall redeem Iſrael from all his Sins.*

Job 9. 29, 30, 31.

Pſal. 145. 8, 9.

Pſal. 103. 8, 9, 17.

Pſal. 130. 7, 8.

Anchith. Oh my Heart, my Bowels, and all within me! What a dreadful Pain did I juſt now feel? God be merciful to me.

Euſeb.

Euſeb. Be of good Comfort; and truſt in God, that he will turn all to the beſt. Yet hence you may obſerve what frail feeble Creatures Men are, and how ſmall a Matter ſerves to diſcompoſe the Frame of our mortal Nature, and put all out of Order.

Anchith I find it ſo by ſad Experience. But I thank God, I am now pretty well at Eaſe again, and if I ſhould not be over troubleſome, would beg of ſome good Friend amongſt you, to ſatisfy me, that if God puniſh me in this World for my Sins, this is not a more probable Token of his Anger, than of his Favour to me.

Theoph. This is too haſty a Concluſion, with which you ſo torment your ſelf, as I ſhall ſhew it to be in due Time. But firſt, give me Leave to ask you a previous neceſſary Queſtion.

Anchith. Ask what you pleaſe, and I will be ſure to anſwer you in the Sincerity of my Heart.

Theoph. What Judgment does your Pariſh-Prieſt make of your Repentance, and the State of your Soul? He ſhould be much better able to ſatisfy you in this Point, than any of us; both as he is better skill'd in Enquiries of this Nature, and as it is to be preſum'd, you have throughly acquainted him, with all your Doubts and Fears, and the Grounds and Reaſons of them; which you know we are Strangers to. What ſays he to this Point?

The great Fault of Pariſhioners in not conſulting their Paſtor in the Affairs of their Soul.

Anchith. Nothing at all; for I have never asked his Opinion concerning it.

Theoph. How? Never ask'd his Opinion? You very much ſurprize me. I could not have thought it poſſible, that you could live ſo near him, for ſo long together, and have ſuch

ſuch Freedom and Intimacy with him in other Reſpects, and neither well, nor ſick, adviſe with him about the great Concerns of Eternity.

Anchith. I was afraid of being too Troubleſome to him.

Theoph. Let me ask you then again: Do you not remember that Injunction of the Apoſtle St. *James*, *Is any ſick? Let him call for the Elders of the Church: And let them pray over him*, &c. And tell me, I beſeech you; Does this Fear keep you from troubling the Lawyer, when your Eſtate is in Danger, or the Phyſician in Time of Sickneſs? Or is an eternal Eſtate of infinite either Happineſs or Miſery of leſs Concern to you, than this ſhort uncertain Life, and its periſhing Enjoyments? Beſides, *Theodorus* is a very good Man, and takes Care of his Charge. And I know him ſo well, that I dare anſwer for him, he would eſteem it a Kindneſs, rather than a Trouble, to give him an Opportunity of aſſiſting you, in the weighty Affairs of the other Life. I have heard him complain of it, as a great Diſcouragement, that of this large Pariſh, ſo few have ever come to him for his Direction. He is not content with the diligent Diſcharge of his Office in Publick, but would heartily rejoice in having more Opportunity of converſing in private with any of his Pariſhioners, that would lay their Caſe before him, and would be ſure to give them the beſt Reſolutions he ſhould be able of all their Doubts, and the fitteſt Inſtructions for the Management of their Lives here, and the Preparation they are to make for another hereafter. Nor can any one take a more effectual Courſe for promoting his own eternal Salvation, than by

St. James 5. 14.

thus

thus diſcloſing his Weakneſſes and Faults, Difficulties and Dangers, in order to a Cure, when in his greateſt Health and Vigour. But when Sickneſs comes, and Death threatens a Man, he is in a peculiar Manner engaged to ſeek for all the Aſſiſtance that can be had, and to this End to acquaint his ſpiritual Phyſician with the Maladies of his Soul, after the ſame Manner as he would the Doctor or Surgeon with the Diſeaſes or Sores of his Body; that ſo whenſoever Death ſhall ſeize him, he may by no Means be unprovided for it. For this Reaſon it is, our Church directs, that *when any Perſon is ſick, Notice ſhall be given to the Miniſter of the Pariſh*, to the End he may come and viſit him; and very juſtly, this being a Seaſon wherein his Help is more eſpecially requir'd, upon account of the near Relation that is betwixt Sickneſs and Death; becauſe there is then a more eſpecial need of his Prayers, and becauſe, moreover, the ſick Perſon is ordinarily more attentive to the Advice given him for the Good of his Soul, than thoſe who ſeem at a greater Diſtance from their latter End, whoſe Thoughts are taken up with thoſe ordinary temporal Affairs, wherein Men are generally too deeply immerſed.

Rubrick before the Office for Viſitation of the Sick.

Anchith. I own my Fault, and will take Care to amend it. It is now about his Time of Prayer; but if God ſpare my Life till the Afternoon, I will beg the Favour of a Viſit from him, and will freely unboſom my ſelf to him, and I hope I ſhall not repent of it.

Euſeb. Take my Word for it, you will not.

Philog. You had beſt ſend immediately before he go to Church, to beg his Prayers for you there, and thoſe of the Congregation, and then let him know that you would entreat

him

him to ſee you in the Afternoon, as ſoon as with Convenience he can.

Anchith. Then I muſt give you the Trouble of calling my Servant, and ſending him.

Philog. I will do it without Delay.

Advice how to behave ourſelves in this Caſe.

Theoph. You muſt reſolve beforehand to deal plainly and ſincerely with him, and conceal nothing that lies upon your Conſcience, or wherein you want his Direction, but to give him a true State of your Caſe. And then it will be his Care to tell you how far you are Right, and where you have miſtaken your Way, whether you are found in the Faith, regular in your Deportment, hearty and fervent in your Devotions; and how you may beſt rectify whatſoever is amiſs in any of theſe Reſpects. He will examine into your Diſpoſition for leaving this World, and your Title to a better, that ſo you may be able to make a Judgment, how it is like to fare with your immortal Soul; will pray with you for the Pardon of your Sins, through our Saviour's Mediation, and for the Aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit, duly to qualify you for whatſoever ſhall be determined for you; and at laſt, if he ſee juſt Grounds for it, will according to the Authority committed to him by his Lord and Maſter, and in Obedience to the Church's Command, upon *your humble and hearty Requeſt*, pronounce to you the comfortable Words of Abſolution; that ſo, if it ſhall pleaſe God to take our good Friend from amongſt us, you may depart in Peace, with a quiet Conſcience, and a ſure Title to a far better Eſtate in the Manſions of Bliſs and Glory; that *when your earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, you may have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

Rubrick for the Viſitation of the Sick.

2 Cor. 5. 1.

Anchith. I am heartily aſhamed and grieved, that I never conſider'd this before. I am ſenſible it has been a great Neglect, that I have not made better Advantage of ſo uſeful a Guide, ſo faithful a Miniſter of God's Word, and ſo effectual a Help in the important Concerns of my Soul. And if it pleaſe God to prolong my Days, I will take eſpecial Care to avoid the like Folly for the future. At preſent I will wait with Patience for his coming, when he ſhall be at Liberty.

Theoph. I hope you will pardon the Freedom I have taken with you, and I thank you for ſo readily hearkening to my Advice; and I am ſatisfied you will ſoon be ſenſible of the Benefit of it. In the mean Time I ſhould proceed to conſider the Doubt you but now ſtarted, that the Puniſhment God lays upon you in this World, is a more probable Token of his Anger, than of his Favour towards you; but that I find we have tired you too much already, and it is therefore high Time that we now take Leave of you.

Euſeb. Let us therefore withdraw; I am ſure it muſt be proper for *Anchithanes*, that we do.

Anchith. I cannot deny but my Spirits are low, and I am no Company for you. But yet, Gentlemen, I cannot part with you, unleſs you will be ſo kind as to appoint another Meeting here in a few Days, that if it pleaſe God to ſpare my Life till then, I may partake of ſome other of your comfortable and uſeful Obſervations; and particularly as to the Doubt now mention'd concerning God's Hand upon me at preſent. I am not able to expreſs my Gratitude for the Benefit of this kind Viſit. And

it

it will be a conſiderable Alleviation of my Pains, if I may but promiſe my ſelf ſome other Doſes of the ſame reviving Cordial.

Euſeb. Since the Diſcourſe you have heard has met with ſo favourable a Reception, I ſhall be ready at any Time to give my Attendance, and do you the beſt Service I ſhall be able.

Theoph. And I moſt willingly.

Philog. I am ſure I ſhall be as deſirous of another ſuch Interview, and ſome farther like Converſation, as you can poſſibly be; and therefore ſhall by no Means abſent my ſelf, if I have Life and Health, and be not inevitably prevented.

Anchith. I moſt heartily thank you all. But when may I hope for this Favour?

Theoph. It ſhall not be long before you are troubled again with our Company. And we will ſettle the Time amongſt our ſelves.

Anchith. I am much oblig'd to you all. And I hope you will not fail of being as good as your Words, and in as little Time as may be.

Euſeb. You need not fear us.

Anchith. I have had too much Experience of your Goodneſs to queſtion it. But my great Deſire of more of the ſame Entertainment puts me upon thus preſſing you to confirm your Promiſe.

Euſeb. Almighty God have you in his Protection, that whether you grow better or worſe, live or die, you may be entitled to an Intereſt in his Favour, and the manifold Bleſſings he has prepared for his Beloved.

Philog.

Philog. I am loth to leave my dear Friend. But I think it is now more than Time for you to try, if you can recover your Spirits, too much exhausted by so long a Visit.

Theoph. Dear *Anchithanes*, it is necessary we should take Leave of you; but it will not be long e'er we renew your Trouble. In the mean Time we shall all be sure to pray for you. And so we commit you to the Divine Protection.

The End of the Second VISIT.

L *The*

The Third VISIT.

By *Theophilus* alone.

The good Man's Settlement of his Temporal Concerns.

The great Benefit of having consulted the spiritual Physician.

Theophilus. MY dear Friend, we have appointed to be with you Three Days hence, but yet passing not far from you, I could not have pardon'd my self, if I had not come a little out of my Way to enquire after you. And I am heartily rejoiced to find you so much better than we left you.

Anchithanes. You are very kind in thus concerning your self for me. But pray how do you know I am so much better? You find me where you left me; and why do you think me amended?

Theoph. You look more chearfully, and seem easier than you were. But the chief Cause of my Congratulation is, that as I came, I had the good Fortune to meet with *Theodorus*, who gave me a good Account of you, and that he took you to be in a fair Way of Recovery. For which you may be sure I could not but be very glad.

Anchith. It is like your self to share in the Welfare or Affliction of your Friends; and I return you a Thousand Thanks for this and all your Favours.

Theoph. I was heartily glad too to find that *Theodorus* had been with you.

Anchith.

Anchith. He is very kind indeed. He has been here Three Times in theſe Two Days ſince I had the Happineſs of your laſt Viſit; and has promis'd to ſee me again in the Evening.

Theoph. And are you ſtill of Opinion, that he thinks it a Trouble to attend upon you, or is diſpleaſed that you ſent to deſire his Aſſiſtance?

Anchith. His Readineſs to viſit, me effectually ſhews the contrary, and makes me aſhamed that I have had no better Thoughts of him.

Theoph. I hope you have been ſo much your own Friend, as to deal freely and openly with him, and acquaint him with all your Doubts, together with the Reaſons of them; and in ſhort, that you have impartially laid before him the whole State of your Soul, and taken his Judgment upon it.

Anchith. To tell you the Truth, I had ſome Difficulty in expoſing my Shame before him; but by Degrees I brought my ſelf to it, and have dealt very frankly with him. And I thank God that I did ſo; for I find my Mind much more at Eaſe ſince; and I hope his pious Aſſiſtance will be of everlaſting Advantage to me. *And of having dealt clearly and openly with him.*

Theoph. Are you at any Time aſhamed to tell your Phyſician the Nature of your Diſtemper, in order to a Cure?

Anchith. I know no Reaſon for that.

Theoph. Is not the Caſe then the ſame in relation to your ſpiritual Phyſician, the Doctor of your Soul? And why ſhould you not be as free with him?

Anchith. Becauſe my Sickneſs is the Effect of my natural Conſtitution, or perhaps in ſome Caſes the Stroke of God's immediate Hand upon me.

Theoph. Not always ſo, but too often Sickneſs and Diſeaſes, and Death it ſelf, are the Effects of Men's own Vices and Folly. But I do not any Way ſuſpect this to be *Anchithanes*'s Caſe, and therefore you may pleaſe to proceed.

Anchith. Sickneſs, I ſay, ordinarily ſpeaking, is what we cannot avoid, and therefore may juſtly be ſorry for it, but have no Cauſe to be aſham'd of it. But my Sins are my own Faults, and ſo caſt a very ill Reflection upon me, and are a ſtrong Temptation to ſtudy how I may moſt ſecurely conceal them. And this made it ſo hard for me to diſcover them. I was afraid, leſt I ſhould loſe *Theodorus*'s good Opinion of me for ever; and if he ſhould ever ſpeak of them to others, as we are generally too apt to do, I ſhould not know how to ſhew my Face abroad, if it ſhould pleaſe God to reſtore me to my former Health, as I begin now to hope he may.

No Danger of his divulging what is thus revealed to him.

Theoph. O Sir, you ſeem a great Stranger to this Sort of penitential Proceedings. The Prieſt is ſtrictly oblig'd not to diſcover what he is told in Confeſſion. And he muſt be a very inconſiderate Man, and no Way deſerving his ſacred Character, who will do it. So that you need be in no Pain upon that Account. For you may reſt aſſured, that one of *Theodorus*'s Piety and Prudence, and diligent Care of his Pariſh, will never be guilty of ſo highly indiſcreet and irregular an Action, as to divulge what is thus ſecretly committed to him in Confeſſion. Though if this were to have

have been, I leave it to your ſelf to determine, whether it be not far more eligible to be condemn'd for your Miſcarriages by Men at preſent, than by Almighty God at the laſt Day. And then as to *Theodorus*'s own private Opinion and Eſteem of you, neither need you fear loſing this, by any Freedom of this Nature you may have taken, were your Sins much fouler and more aggravated than there is Reaſon to ſuppoſe they are. For if **there is Joy in Heaven over a Sinner that repenteth*, how ſhould it enter into your Head to imagine, there ſhould not be Joy likewiſe upon the ſame Account, amongſt all the good Men that are let into the Secret of it? Had your Sins been ever ſo heinous, abundantly more ſo than I can poſſibly expect of my *Anchithanes*, the good Man upon the Notice of them, would preſently conclude this Diſcovery, to proceed from a through Conviction of the Evil, and Danger of them, and a hearty Sorrow and Contrition for them, and ſo would rather honour and love you for your Repentance, than ſlight or undervalue you for ſuch former Miſcarriages. Which now he no longer looks upon as yours, becauſe he knows you have renounced them, and ſought to God for the Pardon of them, and reſolved by his Grace and Aſſiſtance watchfully to refrain from them for the Remainder of your Life.

Nor of his having the worſe Opinion of a true Penitent for any Freedom of this Nature.

* St. Luke 15. 7, 10.

Anchith. He has promis'd me never to let what he has heard from me be known to any one. And I hope he will be as good as his Word.

Theoph. My Life for yours he will. And let me therefore prevail with you never to give your ſelf the leaſt Pain in that reſpect. Whatever you have acquainted him with, depend upon it, all is as ſafe as if it were yet conceal'd

in your own Breaſt. But pray tell me, did he not take it very kindly that you ſent to him?

Anchith. He thanked me over and over again, and told me he would not fail to be with me, as often as the other Affairs of his Pariſh would permit, till it ſhall pleaſe God either to reſtore me to Health, or take me to himſelf.

Theoph. Then you muſt own I was in the right in adviſing you to apply to him.

Anchith. I do ſo. I freely and thankfully acknowledge it.

Theoph. Believe me, he is one of thoſe worthy Divines, thoſe faithful Miniſters of God, who *take heed to themſelves, and to the Flock over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made them Overſeers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own Blood*; and of whom a moſt admirable Author, as well as an indefatigable Promoter of Chriſtian Piety and Devotion, by his Exemplaries of Life in all Reſpects, no leſs than by his excellent and uſeful Writings, teſtifies, * that "they would not only be content, but very much rejoice to aſſiſt in all "*ſpiritual Affairs*, ſuch as ſhall make *Application* on theſe *Accounts*; and would take it "for a great Comfort and Encouragement to "their Labours, if they could find their *Pariſhioners* ready upon all Occaſions, to conſult them in the *Concerns* of their *Souls*, either for the *Inſtruction* of their *Ignorance*, or "the *Reſolution* of their *Doubts*, for *Direction* in "order to the avoiding or withſtanding *Temptations*, for their *Conſolation* under *Tryals* and

Acts 20. 28.

* Mr. *Nelſon's* Preface to the Companion for the Feſtivals and Feaſts, &c. p. XVIII, XIX.

"Afflictions,

" Afflictions, or for the beſt Method of ob-
" taining *Pardon* of their *Sins*, and *quieting*
" their *Conſciences*.

Anchith. This is ſo natural a Deſcription of *Theodorus*, ſo far as I can judge, by what Converſation I have hitherto had with him, and the ſingular Benefit and Comfort I have received by it, that it looks to me, as if that worthy Gentleman had had him particularly in his Eye, whilſt he wrote this.

Theoph. You ought not to imagine that; for there are many ſerious and devout Gentlement of the Clergy, that are equally ready to execute their Office at all Times, and upon all Occaſions However, you ſee by this Time that the Miniſters of God are of ſome other Uſe, than purely to pray to God in the Church, and to preach to the People, and acquaint them with the Nature, and perſwade. preſs, and urge them to the conſciencious Obſervance of their Duty, and to adminiſter the Sacraments in publick. Theſe are noble Offices; and muſt be acknowledged well worthy of a divine Commiſſion, in order to the good Succeſs of them. But yet theſe are not all the Purpoſes, for which they are commiſſion'd and empower'd to act in God's Name; but there are, as I ſaid, many other good Uſes to be made of them.

Anchith. Good Uſes! Yes, admirable Uſes indeed. And ſo I now find experimentally to my no ſmall Comfort and Benefit. For which I mightily condemn my ſelf, that I had not underſtood it ſooner. Had I made the ſame Advantage of *Theodorus*'s Converſation formerly, that I have done theſe Two Days laſt paſt, I ſhould have been far wiſer and better, and quieter and leſs diſturbed in my Mind, and

Anchithanes's *Senſe of the Advantage of having conſulted his Pariſh-Prieſt.*

fitter for either this or the other Life, than I have been. For he has not only prayed effectually and fervently with me and for me, but has examin'd and advis'd me from Time to Time to examine my own Soul, and see what Judgment I am to pass upon my self, what Grounds I have for a deep Humiliation and Repentance, and what for a sure Trust in God through Christ, what Opinion I ought to have of this transitory Life, and its unsatisfactory and perishing Enjoyments, and what of the unconceivable infinite Glories of the other; as also what indispensable Obligations I and all Mankind are under; *to labour not for the Meat that perishes, but for that which endures to everlasting Life,* more convincingly than by all the Sermons that I have ever heard him preach.

St. John 6. 27.

Theoph. You see therefore the Advantage of private Conversation with such a Man. It is not to be suppos'd his unpremeditated Discourse should be really better than his studied Sermons, wherein he had well consider'd before-hand what he was to say. And that it proved more useful to you, might proceed in Part from your present Circumstances, which might not improbably make you more attentive to what he said, and so it might make a greater Impression upon you than at other Times. But what I take to be the chief Cause of the Benefit you mention from your Conversation with him, is that you had the Convenience of propounding your Doubts and Scruples to him, and begging of him to explain himself in any Point, wherein you did not take him right at first; which is a Liberty you could not have when he spake from the Pulpit.

Anchith. It may be ſo. But this I am ſure of, what he told me ſeem'd clearer to me, and more affecting, than any Thing I ever heard from him before.

Theoph. I take it for granted, you will not forget to return your unfeigned Thanks to God for ſetting home what he ſaid upon your Heart to ſo good Advantage.

Anchith. By no Means. I look upon it as a great Mercy of God, and deſire to be truly thankful to him for it, and to bleſs and magnify his holy Name, for vouchſafing to take ſuch Care of me. My Doubts concerning my future State are now in ſome Meaſure ſatisfied, and I hope to have them more ſo, when he ſhall be a little better at Leaſure for it. He alſo promis'd to diſcourſe me farther to morrow, and then to adminiſter to me the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, whereby to create the cloſer Union betwixt my Soul and my Saviour, and then *upon my humble and hearty Requeſt*, he gives me Hope of receiving Abſolution for my Sins. And by God's Grace I am fully reſolved never more to indulge my ſelf in any of them, but to *ſerve God in holineſs and newneſs of Life*, for what farther Time I may have to ſpend here.

Rubrick in the Viſitation of the Sick.

Theoph. A virtuous and truly Chriſtian Reſolution! And may the Almighty give you Grace immoveably to perſiſt in it.

Anchith. Theſe are the principal Advantages I receiv'd from *Theodorus*'s Viſits. But theſe are not all; for there is another of no ſmall Importance, though in no wiſe to be compar'd with what relates to my God, my Saviour, my Soul, and Eternity. He has put me in Mind of a great Neglect of a different Nature, that might have prov'd of very ill Conſequence,

Conſequence, if it had pleas'd God to have ſnatch'd me away without Warning; or if I had had Time, but had not met with ſuch a faithful Monitor.

Theoph. I begin to ſuſpect you had not minded to make a Diſpoſition of your temporal Concerns, as every wiſe Man ought to do.

Anchith. You have hit it. I confeſs I have put off making my Will till my latter End, as too many others do; and ſo was in great Danger of leaving all in Confuſion, and very much contrary to my Mind.

The Fault of not diſpoſing of a Man's temporal Eſtate in the Time of his Health.

Theoph. This, as you ſay, is too general a Fault, namely, that Men put off their Wills, as they do their Repentance, to a ſick Bed; and ſo too frequently never make them at all. But ſince you are now ſenſible of the bad Effects of ſuch a Neglect, I truſt you will not defer it any longer, leſt you ſhould happen to die inteſtate, and your Eſtate ſhould deſcend otherwiſe than you intended, and perhaps a great Part of it be ſpent in coſtly and deſtructive Law-Suits; And moreover, leſt ſuch Animoſities ariſe hereby, amongſt ſuch Relations as you would moſt wiſh to live in Friendſhip and mutual Affection, as may never be quite healed whilſt They live, or for ſome Time afterwards. Some of them alſo may be expos'd to Extremity of Want, when you are gone; whom a ſmall ſeaſonable Legacy might relieve, and put into a Way of living. And if any Debts be owing, they may not be ſo punctually and duly, or at leaſt ſo timely paid, as they ought to be, for want of your Directions concerning them. And in a Word, more and greater Inconveniencies might enſue for want of a Will, than perhaps you are yet aware of.

Anchith.

Anchith. You say very right, good *Theophilus.*

Theoph. Besides, the Scripture it self teaches this Duty of settling our worldly Concerns before we be called to take our Leave of them. For we not only find it recorded of the Patriarch *Abraham*, that he dispos'd of his Estate before he died, the Estate it self to *Isaac*, and Legacies to the Sons of his Concubines; and noted afterwards of *Achitophel*, as an Instance of common Prudence, that he *put his House in Order* before he went and hanged himself; that is, says Bishop *Patrick* upon the Words, *he settled his Affairs, and dispos'd of his Estate*; But the Prophet *Isaiah* was sent to King *Hezekiah* with a positive Commission to *set his House* in order before his Death. For so it is written, *In those Days was Hezekiah sick unto Death: And the Prophet Isaiah the Son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine House in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.* *Hezekiah* was like to die, and one Requisite you see in order to his doing it aright, was first to *set his House in order*, or in other modern Terms, to make his Will. A Work which ought to be done by every one who has any Store of worldly Goods to dispose of, and does not resolve that they should all descend as the Law directs, to the next Heir or Heirs. But which never can be done at all, if not done before Death comes; and hardly aright, and as it ought to be, if not before the Man is very sick, and near his End. And accordingly * *Buxtorf* tells us of the *Jews*, that when any of them who happens to be dangerously ill, is visited,

Gen. 25. 5, 6.

2 Sam. 17. 21.

2 Kings 20. 1.

* Synag. Jud. c. 49.

whether

whether by the *Rabbi* or other of his Friends, if he be a rich Man, their firſt Advice to him is about the Settlement of his *Eſtate*. Our Church I confeſs does not ſo, but allows the Precedence to that which is of infinitely greater Concern to the ſick Man, the Care of his immortal Soul. But then it ſubjoins this Rubrick, *If he have not before diſpoſed of his Goods, let him then be admoniſh'd to make his Will, and to declare his Debts, what he oweth, and what is owing to him, for the better diſcharging of his Conſcience, and the Quietneſs of his Executors.* Adding moreover, that *Men ſhould be put in Remembrance to take Order for the ſettling of their temporal Eſtates, whilſt they are in Health.*

In the Office for the Viſitation of the Sick.

Anchith. I wiſh I had conſider'd this ſooner, for ſo I ſhould have taken other Meaſures than I have done.

Theoph. I add farther, it will be a Satisfaction to your ſelf to think, that as you have been preparing for another State, that you may die in Peace, and be everlaſtingly happy in a better World, ſo you have not been wanting to do your Part, towards making your Relations and Friends, and ſome Objects of your Charity, as eaſy and happy as you can in this.

Anchith. Your Reaſons ſeem to me very juſt, and I have nothing to ſay againſt them. And I muſt therefore acquaint you, that I have already ſent for an Attorney juſt before you came in; and for ought I know, he may be in the Houſe by this Time.

Theoph. This ſhould have been done before, it being the proper Work of one in perfect Health, when he is able rightly to conſider all he does, and has moſt Time for it, whereby both to do it the more compleatly, and to eaſe himſelf

himſelf of the Trouble of it, when he ſhall come to languiſh upon a Sick-Bed, at which Time he will be ſure to have Buſineſs of another Nature upon his Hands.

Anchith. I am now truly convinc'd of my Error, in having deferred it thus long, and therefore think it Time to do it now, without any farther Delay. And if it ſhould pleaſe God to reſtore me to my Health, which at preſent I ſee little Reaſon to expect, and will not therefore truſt to any Hopes of it; if it ſhould pleaſe God, I ſay, to reſtore me to my Health, I will never be without a Will by me, to prevent all the foremention'd Inconveniencies. I did not think my Life to be ſo ſhort as I now apprehend it may be; and this made me more careleſs and dilatory than I ought by any Means to have been.

Theoph. Wherefore now you ſee Cauſe to blame your ſelf, for having ſo long truſted to ſo great an Uncertainty, and to be thankful that you was not totally diſappointed by it. Now you may ſee, no Man is ſure of his Life for any Time, and none therefore but ought to have all Things in readineſs for a Change, whenſoever it ſhall come; as poſſibly it may very ſpeedily. *We know not what ſhall be on the morrow. For what is your Life? It is even a Vapour that appeareth for a little Time, and then vaniſheth away.* St. James 4. 14.

Anchith. I am ſo throughly ſenſible of my Folly, that I will delay this neceſſary Work no longer. Some body there deſire the Attorney to come up.

Theoph. Then *Anchithanes*, I will take Leave of you till *Thurſday* next, when, as I told you, we have appointed to be here again, as you deſir'd.

Anchith. I beg of you by no Means to leave me.

Theoph. A Buſineſs of ſuch a Nature as you are now going about, ought, for divers Reaſons, to be done with Privacy; and it will therefore be beſt to leave you and the Attorney to your ſelves, I called as I was paſſing not far off, to ſee how you were, but had no Thoughts of interrupting any Affairs you ſhould have to diſpatch.

Anchith. I cannot let you go. I have nothing to order, but what you may very ſafely be privy to; and beſides, I may ſtand in Need of your Advice; and therefore pray let me beg your Stay, if it be no Inconvenience to your ſelf.

Theoph. You ſhall command me.

Attorney. Sir, I am very ſorry to find ſo worthy a Gentleman, and whom we all moſt deſervedly honour and eſteem, in ſo weak a Condition. I heard, Sir, you was pleas'd to ſend for me, and am come accordingly to receive your Commands.

Anchith. I thank you, Sir. Bleſſed be God, I am ſomewhat better than I was, but however, ſtill as you ſee ſick and weak, and know not how ſoon I may leave the World; and being deſirous, in the mean Time, to make a Diſpoſition of what it has pleaſed Almighty God to give me in it; I ſent to beg the Favour of you, of making my Will. And I thank my God, I am as ready to leave theſe tranſitory Enjoyments, as ever I was to receive them. And I cannot but be pleas'd in my ſelf, to think that ever ſince I came to the Inheritance of them, I have always made them to ſerve, not to rule and govern me, and at all Times could be content to part with them, whenever

whenever God's Glory, or my Neighbours Wants, requir'd it of me.

Theoph. So St. *John* adviſes, *not to love the World, neither the Things of the World*; aſſuring us, moreover, that *if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* In like Manner, as our bleſſed Saviour declares it, *impoſſible to ſerve God and Mammon*; and commands to *make to our ſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs, that when we fail they may receive us into everlaſting Habitations.* And that you have taken this Courſe, appears from your Indifferency as to theſe temporal good Things, according to the Doctrine of our bleſſed Lord; *Where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.*

1 St. Joh. 2. 15.

St. Mat. 6. 24.

St. Luke. 16. 9.

St. Mat. 6. 21.

Anchith. I muſt own I have in ſome Meaſure made this my Study, though with a great many Faults and Failings. But I heartily wiſh I had done it more, and to better Purpoſes. —— But, if you pleaſe, we will begin.

Att. It is great Pity, Sir, this Work is now to do. However, it is not yet too late; and therefore if you will pleaſe to give me your Inſtructions, I will take Care faithfully to purſue them.

Anchith. Begin. *In the Name of God, Amen.* I Anchithanes, *of the Pariſh of* A. *in the County of* B. *an unworthy Member of the Church of Chriſt, as ſettled and reformed here in* England, *being through the abundant Mercy and Goodneſs of God, though weak in Body, yet of a ſound and perfect Underſtanding and Memory, do conſtitute this my laſt Will and Teſtament, and deſire it may be received by all as ſuch.* Imprimis, *I moſt humbly bequeath my Soul to God my Maker, beſeeching his moſt gracious Acceptance of it, through the all-ſufficient Merits and Mediation of my moſt compaſſionate Redeemer,*

The ſick Man makes his Will.

Bequeaths his Soul to God.

Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt, *who gave himſelf to be an Attonement for my Sins, and* is able to ſave to the utmoſt all that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them, *and who I truſt will not reject me a returning penitent Sinner, when I come to him for Mercy. In this Hope and Confidence I render up my Soul with Comfort, humbly beſeeching the moſt bleſſed and glorious Trinity, one God moſt holy, moſt merciful and gracious, to prepare me for the Time of my Diſſolution, and then to take me to himſelf, into that Peace, and Reſt, and incomparable Felicity, which he has prepar'd for all that love and fear his holy Name. Amen, bleſſed God, Amen.*

Theoph. I am glad to hear you ſpeak ſo ſtrongly, and hope you will be able to hold out, till you ſhall have finiſh'd this neceſſary and uſeful Work. But I am much more glad to ſee you begin it ſo devoutly and religiouſly, as thereby to teſtify the good Diſpoſition of Soul you are in, and the Fitneſs you have brought your ſelf to, for quitting this tranſitory, troubleſome, wicked World, whenſoever your Time ſhall come.

Anchith. If I were not very ſerious and devout, now that I have a near View of Eternity, and know not how ſoon, how very ſoon I may be in it, when ſhould I be ſo? I am ſure the greateſt Concern I can poſſibly have, is to make my Peace with God, and ſo to perfect my Repentance for all my Sins, and my Reliance upon his Mercy through Chriſt, as that I may have a well-grounded Hope in him, whenſoever my Soul ſhall ſhake off this earthly Body, and take its Flight into another World.

Theoph.

Theoph. This, it is true, is each one's great Concern, and there is none, how young, how healthful, how active, how lively, how ſtrong ſoever, but ought to make it his continual Care thus to prepare himſelf for a better State. Much more are thoſe who lie upon a Sick-Bed called upon, to apply themſelves to it with the utmoſt Diligence, before it be too late.

Anchith. I thank God I am not now to begin my Repentance: It has been indeed the Buſineſs of moſt Part of Life, though, with Sorrow and Shame I ſay it, too ſadly defective in many Reſpects. For which Reaſon I am now deſirous to compleat it, and make it as perfect as I can, that ſo I may depart hence to the better Advantage. But I believe he has written all I had directed. Have you not?

Attor. Yes, Sir, and am ready to proceed whenever you pleaſe.

Anchith. So will I then. *I earneſtly beg Pardon of any I have offended, and am ready to make full Reſtitution, if I have ignorantly wronged any one; for I am ſure I have not knowingly. And if any have abus'd or injur'd me, I freely forgive it.*

Begs Pardon of any he has offended or injur'd, and forgives all that offended or injur'd him.

Theoph. This is ſo neceſſary a Part of Chriſtianity, that there is no Hope for any one to be ſav'd without it. It is our bleſſed Saviour's own Command, *If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembereſt that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee; leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy Way, firſt be reconcil'd to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* Though the Gift were already with the Prieſt to be offer'd up by Way of Atonement for him that brought it, yet was no Atonement to be expected by it, if he were guilty of any Affront

St. Mat. 5. 23, 24.

or Wrong done to his Neighbour, and had not ſome Way made up the Breach. And it is therefore our Saviour's Direction, not to pretend to any ſuch Oblation, or to hope for any Benefit by it, till the injur'd Perſon have a due Satisfaction given him. And if this be neceſſary at a Man's coming with his Gift to the Altar, it muſt queſtionleſs be more ſo, when he is going out of the World, and will never more have it in his Power to offer at a Reparation. The leaſt therefore a true Penitent can do in that nice Juncture, is to expreſs his Sorrow, and entreat Forgiveneſs of any Provocation or Affront given to whomſoever. But if my Neighbour be otherwiſe injur'd, by Cheating, Extortion, Theft, or whatever Sort of Injuſtice, I muſt not only beg his Pardon, but if able, muſt make him full Reparation for the Wrong it ſelf, and all the ill Conſequences that have accrued to him by it; as might eaſily be ſhewn from divers Places of Scripture. And as theſe are neceſſary Parts of Juſtice to ſuch as I have offended or wrong'd, ſo on the other Hand, I am no leſs requir'd to be ready to forgive any that has offended me, and to come to eaſy Terms with ſuch as have any Way defrauded or injur'd me, and are deſirous of Forgiveneſs. St. *Paul* inſtances in it as one evident Means of our *walking worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called*, that * *with Lowlineſs, Meekneſs, and Long ſuffering, we forbear one another in Love*; and at another Time † requires to *put on, as the Elect of God holy and beloved, Bowels of Mercies, Kindneſs, Humbleneſs of Mind, Meekneſs, and Long-ſuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any Man have a Quarrel againſt any; even as Chriſt forgave you*, ſays the Apoſtle, *ſo alſo do ye*. And it

Gen. 43. 12. *Lev.* 6. 4. & 24. 18. *Numb.* 5. 6, 7, 8. 1 *Sam.* 12. 1, 3. *Nehem.* 5. 10, 11. *Zec* 5. 3. 4. *St. Luke* 19. 8.

* Eph. 4. 1, 2.

† Coloſ. 3. 12, 13.

it is our bleſſed Saviour's poſitive Determination in the Caſe, that whoſoever deſires Forgiveneſs from God Almighty of his Sins and Tranſgreſſions againſt him, he muſt be ſure to clear the Way to it, by forgiving his Brethren their leſſer Offences againſt himſelf. *For, if ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive your Treſpaſſes: But if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.* St. Mat. 6. 14, 15.

Anchith. *And I profeſs my ſelf to die in the Faith and Communion of the Church of* England; *the ſame Faith that is taught in the holy Scripture, that was profeſs'd and maintain'd in the firſt and pureſt Ages of the Church, and ſeal'd with the Blood of vaſt Multitudes of Martyrs, and is contain'd in the Three Creeds now in Uſe amongſt us; and the moſt primitive and beſt Communion now in the whole World.* Makes Profeſſion of his Faith.

Theoph. Hereby you will not only ſtand upon Record as an Orthodox Chriſtian, but do alſo bear a laudable Teſtimony againſt the Hereticks and Infidels of our Time, who are ſo indefatigably ſet upon undermining our common Chriſtianity, and all reveal'd Religion.

Anchith. You take it then to be a Piece of Juſtice I owe to my ſelf, and to the Religion I profeſs, and reſolve by God's Grace to die in, to make my Profeſſion of it at this Time.

Theoph. I do ſo; and commend you for it. But will you pleaſe to go on.

Anchith. Now for my earthly Part. Be pleas'd to write; *Next I give my Body to the Earth, from whence it was taken, in full Aſſurance of its Reſurrection from thence at the laſt Day,* when this Mortal ſhall put on Immortality, Diſpoſes of his Body. 1 Cor. 15. 53.

and this Corruptible Incorruption, *when the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt ſhall change it, *that it may* be faſhion'd like to his glorious Body, by the mighty Power whereby he is able to ſubdue all Things to himſelf, *that I ſhall then receive it again wonderfully improv'd and purify'd, not ſuch groſs, weak, periſhing Fleſh and Blood, as it has hitherto been, but infinitely both ſplendid and durable, like our bleſſed Saviour's glorified Body.*

Phil. 3. 20, 21.

Attor. Will you not next give ſome Orders about your Funeral?

Orders his Funeral.

Anchith. Yes. *As for my Burial, I deſire it may be Decent, without Pomp or State, at the Diſcretion of my dear Wife, and my Executors hereafter named, who, I doubt not, will manage it with all requiſite Prudence.*

Theoph. Herein I perfectly approve of your Direction. For though a decent Regard ought certainly to be paid to our departed Friends, and no good Man will or can think otherwiſe; yet in my Opinion all Exceſs this Way is blameable, inaſmuch as I cannot but think it far better to retrench from this, what may be handſomely ſpar'd, for the Benefit of ſuch as are living, that ſo the Wants of ſome in Neceſſity may be ſupplied by it.

Anchith. That truly was my Conſideration; and for this Reaſon I ſhall give ſomewhat the more to that good Uſe. But, Sir, we interrupt you. Be pleas'd to add, *As to my worldly Eſtate, I will and poſitively order, that all my Debts, which to my Comfort are but few and ſmall, be paid out of Hand, if I don't live to pay them my ſelf. For, as I never lov'd to keep poor People out of their Money in my Life-time, as little will I allow it after my Death.*

Gives his Eſtate.

Theoph.

Theoph. This is a very commendable Article. And I wiſh all others would follow your Example; to do juſtly, being both a neceſſary Duty of natural Religion, and a conſiderable Part of Chriſtianity as enjoin'd in Scripture. In the Old Teſtament, ſays the Prophet, *He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is Good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Where, *doing juſtly*, you ſee is ſet in the Front of the different Qualifications, requir'd of ſuch as would approve themſelves to God, as his faithful Servants. And in the New Teſtament the Apoſtle directs, * *To owe no one any Thing, but to love one another*; and that † *no Man go beyond, or defraud his Brother in any Matter*; and for this weighty Reaſon, ‖ *for the Lord is the Avenger of all ſuch.* Mic. 6. 8. * Rom. 13. 8. † 1 Theſ. 4. 6. ‖ Ibid.

Attor. It is done, Sir.

Anchith. *To my dear and loving Wife* Sophronia, *with whom I have liv'd very happily, and with mutual Affection and Fidelity for many Years, and by whom God has been pleas'd to give me ſeveral Children, moſt of whom are gone to Heaven before me, but whereof Three are yet alive, though I doubt not but that, ſhe being a very good Woman, and a true and ſincere Chriſtian, Almighty God will, according to his Promiſe, be a Husband unto her, and provide for her all Things neceſſary for this Life; yet, ſince he has bleſſed me with a convenient Portion of temporal Riches, to her I give for Term of Life, this Houſe wherein I now dwell, with all the Furniture, and the Lands and Tenements that lie about it; and after my Death, to my only Son* Theodoſius, *and his Heirs for ever. To whom I leave alſo, from the Time of my Death, my Two other Eſtates ſcituate in the Pariſh of* N. *he paying to each of his Siſters,* Claris *and* Hypomone,

pomone, *One thouſand Pounds. And if he die before them, and without Iſſue, then his Land, (all but the Value of One thouſand Pounds, which I freely impower him to diſpoſe of as he ſhall think fit,) ſhall deſcend and belong equally to theſe my Two Daughters. And I truſt my dear Wife will be mindful to train them all up* in the Nourture and Admonition of the Lord, *as becomes a wiſe, and tender, and truly Chriſtian Parent, and who hopes to be eternally happy with them in a better State.*

Attor. At what Time will you pleaſe your Two Daughters Portions ſhall be due to them, if their Brother live?

Anchith. Well thought of; *At the Age of One and twenty Years, or Day of Marriage, which ſhall firſt happen; and Intereſt at Five* per Cent. *in the mean Time.*

Attor. It ſhall be ſo. What will you pleaſe to have next?

Anchith. *To my Nephews,* Pamphilus *and* Panaretus, *I give each Two hundred Pounds, and to my Neece* Irene *Three hundred Pounds. To my truſty Servant* Piſtus *I give Twenty Pounds, to* Harmagathus *Ten Pounds, and to each of my Servants that ſhall be ſo at the Time of my Death Five Pounds. They have been careful of my Buſineſs, and ſerv'd me faithfully,* the good Lord reward them for it.

Attor. What more will you pleaſe to add?

Anchith. I think I have done as to theſe Legacies. But let me not forget *my poor Debtors who owe me ſome ſmall Matters; which, becauſe they are in a low Condition, and not well able to pay them, I freely remit them all, forgiving ſuch my Debtors, as I deſire God ſhould forgive my Debts for Chriſt's ſake.*

Theoph.

Theoph. But you ſpake of beſtowing ſomething in Charity.

Anchith. I did ſo; and am bethinking my ſelf of the right Method of doing it; I would give Five hundred Pounds, but would willingly give it the beſt Way I can, and ſo as may moſt effectually anſwer the Deſign of giving it.

Attor. I hope, Sir, you will be liberal to the Poor of this Pariſh, ſo as that both the preſent and future Ages may bleſs your Memory.

Anchith. Kind to the Poor! You mean to the Rich; for this Sort of Gifts ſerves only to leſſen the Pariſh-Rates, and ſo relieves not the Poor, but ſpares thoſe who are bound by Law to relieve them. Which is a Practice I do not underſtand, and for which no body ſhall blame me. But yet, that I may not ſeem to forget the Place of my Nativity, *I give Fifty Pounds to be diſtributed according to the Diſcretion of my Executors, among ſuch of my Neighbours of this Pariſh as they ſhall apprehend to want ſome Aſſiſtance, but who do not receive Alms, nor have any Allowance from the Pariſh.* This I think to be true Charity, though the other I can by no Means reckon to be ſo.

Theoph. What do you think, my Friend, of building an Alms-Houſe for ſome poor old Men, or Widows? This will be a laſting Charity, and a Way to do Good to Poſterity.

Anchith. I do not condemn ſuch as order their Charity this Way; but on the other Hand, I commend their good Intention in it. But yet, I ſee theſe Sort of Donations ſometimes quite taken away, by ſome Artifice or other, though ever ſo firmly ſettled; and

much oftner ſo groſly abus'd, and diverted from the Deſign of the Donor, that I have long thought there are much better Ways for diſpoſing of Charity than this. I am not deſirous of being noted by Paſſengers as a Benefactor, but am rather for giving what I have to beſtow, ſo as that I may be ſure of its coming to the Hands of thoſe for whom it is intended. And for this Reaſon, I have choſen to diſtribute the main of my Charity in my Life-time, when I might ſee the good Effect of it, and might be ſure it would not be plac'd on any but as I deſign'd it ſhould. And this Method I the rather choſe upon another Account likewiſe, becauſe I always eſteem'd it much truer Charity, and far better becoming our holy Profeſſion, to give out of what I my ſelf have and can uſe, than to keep all till I die, and then give, though more largely, from my Heirs and Executors, when I can enjoy it no longer. But I find I have overtir'd my ſelf, and muſt therefore forbear for a while.

Theoph. It is now Time to leave you, that you may take ſome Reſt, leſt you ſhould not be able to finiſh all to morrow, as I heartily wiſh you may.

Anchith. Pardon me, good *Theophilus*, if I cannot be of your Mind. *I know not what a Day may bring forth*; and will not therefore defer a Matter of this Nature any longer than is abſolutely neceſſary. But if you will pleaſe to take this Gentleman into the Garden, and gather what Fruit you can meet with there, you will be very obliging. I beg alſo you will command any Thing my Houſe affords for your Refreſhment, till I hope by God's Bleſſing I may be able to proceed. Which if I be,

I will

I will give you Notice of it, and will entreat your Return.

Theoph. Poſſibly you may get a little Sleep, when you are alone, and therefore I thank you for your Civility, and ſhall withdraw with this worthy Gentleman, till we receive your Summons to give our Attendance.

Anchith. This little Sleep has refreſh'd me very conſiderably; ſo that we may proceed now in the Buſineſs we were upon.

Servant. I hope you may.

Anchith. Let *Theophilus* know I am ready, whenever they will pleaſe to walk up.

Theoph. My good Friend, how do you find your ſelf after the little Reſt you have had.

Anchith. My Spirits are but low, but much better than when you left me; for in truth I was ſo heartily tir'd, I could hold out no longer. But now I have taken a Sup of my Cordial, and have got a ſhort Sleep, I am in great Hopes I ſhall be able to finiſh without any farther Interruption.

Attor. You ſeem, Sir, to be reſolv'd againſt any laſting Charity.

Anchith. Not ſo neither. Againſt an Alms-Houſe I am; but if either of you can direct me to any other, ſuch as I ſhall approve of, I am not reſolv'd againſt it.

Theoph. What do you think of the Univerſities?

Anchith. I was my ſelf, for ſome Time, an unworthy Member of one of them, and cannot but have a Kindneſs for it ever ſince. But what do you adviſe to there?

Theoph. What if you ſhould found another Fellowſhip in the College you belong'd to?

Anchith.

Anchith. That College is very well endow'd already. But beſides, I have another very ſubſtantial Argument againſt it, and that is the Money I deſign to give, being Three hundred and fifty Pounds, will not be ſufficient for it.

Theoph. That is true. But it will make an excellent Scholarſhip for ſome ingenious hopeful Youth.

Anchith. It might ſerve very well for that. But what do you think of giving it to buy an Advowſon for the College?

Theoph. There I muſt readily concur with you, this being a Way of preferring Three at once, ſo oft as the Benefice ſo purchaſed ſhall become vacant. Beſides that, it is as likely a Way as can be taken, to have the Pariſh conſtantly well ſupplied. And again, there are Two other Advantages in it; the one, that there is no Fear of a College's diſpoſing of it Symoniacally, as private Patrons too commonly do; the other, that this will be the moſt effectual Way I can think of, to ſecure the Tythes from the Invaſion of a covetous Patron, and eſpecially if the Pariſh ſhould ever happen to be inclos'd, which to my Knowledge has often been the Ruin of the Parſonage, where the Lord of the Mannor thus incloſed has been Patron. Divers Inſtances whereof I could mention, now within the Memory of Man. And I think too great Care cannot be taken againſt ſo notorious Sacrilege.

Anchith. Pray, *Theophilus*, explain your ſelf, that I may underſtand how Three come to be prefer'd at once?

Theoph. That I ſhall quickly do. For firſt, a Fellow being preſented to the vacant Benefice, a Scholar is next promoted to his Fellowſhip,

ſhip, and ſo Room is made in the laſt Place, for ſome other to ſucceed in his Scholarſhip.

Anchith. You ſay right. And I am accordingly moſt inclinable to this Way of doing Good to all Three. But what Security is there, that the Church will be well ſupplied by this Means?

Theoph. Abſolute Security there is none, nor can be any Way. But this Way comes as near it as any, becauſe the Living falling to ſome Perſon of good Standing in the Univerſity, and whom the College have no material Exception to, this is as ſure a Way as I can think of to have the Place well fill'd with a learned and worthy Paſtor.

Anchith. I am ſatisfied this will be a proper Benefaction, if Three hundred and fifty Pounds would purchaſe a perpetual Advowſon, of a Benefice worth ſuch a Perſon's Acceptance; but I fear it will not.

Theoph. I fear it too. But Four or Five hundred Pounds will; and you may leave it either to the College, or in your Executor's Hands, they giving Security to the College for it, till the Intereſt ſhall have made it up Five hundred Pounds; and to be paid ſooner, if they think fit to call it in, and can any Way make it anſwer your intended End.

Anchith. Will you pleaſe then to write, Sir.

Attor. What will you pleaſe to have written?

Anchith. Item, *I give and bequeath to* T. *College in the Univerſity of* N. *Three hundred and fifty Pounds, to purchaſe a perpetual Advowſon of a Benefice, to be beſtowed, as often as by Death or otherwiſe it ſhall become vacant, upon ſome Fellow of the College, whom they ſhall think moſt proper, and who ſhall be oblig'd to quit*

quit his Fellowſhip for it; and I order my Executors to give Security for the Payment of that Sum, together with its Intereſt at Five per Cent. *ſo ſoon as the College ſhall be ſatisfied that it will ſuffice for the intended Purchaſe.*

Attor. Here are, Sir, but Four hundred Pounds yet given.

Anchith. I know it; and am thinking of Objects for the reſt.

Theoph. What think you of *Euſebes*, Vicar of *N.*? He is a very good Man, both for his Life and Doctrine, and has a large Family, and little to maintain them.

Anchith. You ſay right. Let him have Forty Pounds given him, for putting forth his Two eldeſt Sons Apprentices.

Attor. It is done.

Anchith. Philotes is a very good Woman, but ſtreighten'd in her Circumſtances ſince her Husband's Death; give her therefore Ten Pounds to defray the Charges of her late Sickneſs.

Theoph. Whom will you think of next?

Anchith. I have already thought of a fit Perſon. My Neighbour *Arotreus* is a very honeſt laborious Man, but unſucceſsful, and has ſeveral young Children. Beſides, he has lately loſt a Horſe and Two Cows, which has almoſt broken his Back; and to ſet him up again muſt needs be an Act of great Charity. Put him down *Twenty Pounds.*

Attor. It is done.

Anchith. What now remains of the Five hundred Pounds?

Attor. Sir, you have already diſpos'd of Fifty Pounds, Three hundred and fifty, Forty Pounds, Ten Pounds, Twenty Pounds, together Four hundred and ſeventy Pounds, ſo that

that there remain now Thirty Pounds to be order'd as you pleaſe.

Anchith. My Tenant *Epimeles* is a very induſtrious Man, and takes a great deal of Pains, and maintains his Family comfortably for the moſt Part. But I doubt he goes backwards in the World, and think therefore a ſmall Legacy may come very ſeaſonably to him. *Give him Ten Pounds.*

Attor. I ſhall do it.

Anchith. My Neighbour *Geron* is very aged and infirm, and a little Support may in all Probability be very welcome to him. *Give him Ten Pounds likewiſe.*

Attor. It is done, Sir.

Anchith. Now I think there are only Ten Pounds remaining.

Attor. No more, Sir.

Anchith. That *I give to be laid out weekly by my Executors, ſo long as it ſhall laſt, for teaching poor Children to read and ſay their Catechiſm.* Or if my Neighbours will agree together, as they have been talking they would, for ſome Time, to ſet up a *Charity School* for the Children of the Pariſh, betwixt this and *Candlemas-day* next, I then *order this Ten Pounds, or what ſhall be remaining of it at that Time, whenſoever it ſhall be, to be made up Twenty Pounds for a Beginning of ſo good a Work.*

Attor. Is this all, Sir?

Anchith. No; add farther, *The ſmall Remainders of my Eſtate I give to my very good Friends, and dear and kind Relations,* Eubulus *and* Happlous, *to be divided equally between them. And do conſtitute them Executors of this my laſt Will and Teſtament, and Truſtees for my Wife and Children.*

Attor. It will be requiſite that you ſign and ſeal your Will.

Anchith.

Anchith. I need not direct you for that.

Attor. Thus therefore I write, *In witneſs whereof, I have hereto ſet my Hand and Seal the Third Day of* July, *in the Year of our Lord*, 1711. Now, Sir, will you pleaſe to ſign it?

Anchith. I will do it as well as I am able. But pray firſt let me hear it read all over, that I may know what I ſign.

Theoph. That is highly reaſonable, if it will not be over-troubleſome to you to attend to it.

Anchith. I will try what I can do. I am not very fit to attend to any Thing; but yet I hope I ſhall be able to obſerve and underſtand what is read. Begin therefore when you pleaſe.

Attor. *In the Name of God, Amen.* I Anchithanes, *&c.*

Anchith. It is very right, and as I deſign'd it; and if you pleaſe to reach me it hither, I will ſign it as well as I can. Wherefore I declare this to be my laſt Will and Teſtament, and beg of you to witneſs for me, that I do ſo.

Witneſs,
Theophilus.
Nomicus.
Dulus.

Anchithanes. Here I take off my Seal; and do declare this to be my laſt Will and Teſtament.

Anchith. I think you have dated right.

Attor. Yes, Sir, this Third Day of *July*, in the Year of our Lord One thouſand Seven hundred and Eleven.

Anchith. It is very well. And now I ſuppoſe all is done as it ſhould be.

Attor. Sir, it is.

Anchith. Then, Sir, I thank you. *Dulus,* take care to ſatisfy the Gentleman for the Trouble I have given him. And now, my Friend *Theophilus,* I have abundance of Thanks to return to you, for having ſo long exerciſed your Patience, I know I have been very troubleſome to you; but I hope you will pardon the Importunity of one who is not able to help himſelf, and has therefore need of the kind Aſſiſtance of all his Friends; eſpecially ſince it is not long I am like to burden you.

Theoph. How long you may be in this Condition, God only knows. Your Friends are ſuch Lovers of themſelves, that they are willing to hope they may have the Enjoyment of ſo worthy and dear a Friend as your ſelf for many Years yet to come; and do therefore all agree in praying for your happy and ſpeedy Recovery. However, you do well to think of, and make all the Preparation you can for a Change, that whenſoever it ſhall come, whether now, or at a good Diſtance hence, you may be always in a Readineſs for it. The fitter you are to die, believe me, the fitter you will be to live, and the more Comfort and Satisfaction you will find in your ſelf here, and will certainly be unſpeakably the more happy for it hereafter.

His Satisfaction in having made his Will.

Anchith. I thank God I have now done one Part of my Buſineſs, and thereby have eaſed my Mind as to all Solicitude for the Things of this World. So, that if it ſhall pleaſe God to take me away immediately, I may be ſure what I leave behind me will go to thoſe who I deſire ſhould have it; and ſo my Relations knowing what is their own, will have no Grounds of quarrelling amongſt themſelves, as they poſſibly might have done, if I had died inteſtate.

A Prayer

A Prayer after having made his Will.

I Thank thee, O God, for thy great Goodneſs and Mercy towards me, in having ſo plentifully provided for my Subſiſtance, during my Abode in this World. Whilſt others have been in want, I have been furniſh'd with whatſoever my Condition call'd for, and have had ſomething alſo to ſpare for the Relief of my indigent Neighbours; ſuch has been thy Bounty towards me. And now if thou ſeeſt fit to ſtrip me of all I have hitherto enjoy'd, by taking me away from it, thou depriveſt me only of what thou ſo freely gaveſt me, and what I ſhall have no longer Occaſion for. Grant me therefore, gracious Lord, to part with it as willingly to thoſe that come after, as ever I receiv'd, either the Whole, or any Part of it, from ſuch as have gone before. Bleſs it to thoſe into whoſe Hands I commit it, that it may ſerve both to their preſent, and their eternal Welfare, that they may not only live the more comfortably for it here, but alſo therewith make to themſelves Friends, who, when they fail, may receive them into everlaſting Habitations. And grant to me, thine unworthy Servant, that when my tottering earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle ſhall be diſſolv'd, I may have a Building of God, a Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens, and may be entitled to a better and an enduring Subſtance there, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

Theoph. I hope you are well ſatisfied with what you have done.

Anchith. It is ſome Eaſe to my Mind to think, that I have done as much as in me lies, to ſettle Peace amongſt my Friends. But that which

pleaſes me moſt is, to think that I have nothing now to do, but purely to apply my ſelf to the weaning my Affections from the Things of this World, raiſing them up to thoſe that are above, and the perfecting my Repentance, and ſuing to God for the Pardon of my Sins, and an Intereſt in his Favour, through the powerful Mediation of my bleſſed Saviour. And now,

A Prayer for the Divine Protection.

I.

O Lord, look down from Heaven, behold, viſit, and relieve thy Servant. Look upon me with the Eyes of thy Mercy, give me Comfort and ſure Confidence in thee, defend me from the Danger of the Enemy, and keep me in perpetual Peace and Safety, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

Another for Victory over Sin.

II.

My Tranſgreſſions, O Lord, are great and numerous, but thy Mercies are incomparably more and greater; they are unconceivably great, and without Number. Which is a mighty Encouragement to ſuch poor guilty Creatures as I am to make our Addreſſes at the Throne of thy Grace, with hope of being heard by thee. Let it not be in vain that I now implore thy Help. As thou haſt fill'd my Heart with an unfeigned Sorrow for my many repeated Iniquities, and made me earneſtly deſirous of Pardon and Forgiveneſs, make me moreover diligent

and industrious, to testify the Sincerity of my Repentance, by a through Mortification and Amendment. And that the Degrees of my Repentance may in some Measure answer the Heinousness of my Sins, inspire my Soul with such devout Affections, such holy Desires and Inclinations, as that I may run the Way of thy Commandments with unwearied Courage and Alacrity, and endeavour, by my future Care, to make the best Amends I shall be able for my former Negligence. It is abundantly too much that I have hitherto been wanting in that Duty thou requirest of me. Grant me, for the Time to come, to be always upon my Watch, and always intent upon serving thee to the best of my Power. Let no Temptation befal me, but such as is common to Men, and with the Temptation also do thou, of thy great Goodness, make a Way to escape, that I may be able to withstand and conquer it. Work in me both to will and to do of thy good Pleasure. I not only live in the midst of a deceitful World, but have a corrupt Heart of my own, apt to start aside in Time of Trial, and a subtle malicious Enemy that lies in wait for my Halting, so that I am ruin'd, and must perish irrecoverably without thy Protection. Deny me not such a Measure of thy Spirit, as may conduct me safely through all my Dangers, and enable me to come off Victor in all my Conflicts; that I may go from Strength to Strength, and never be discourag'd, whatsoever Encounters thou callest me to. This I beg through the Merits and Intercession of thy blessed Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Another

Another for an intire Submiſſion to God's Will.

III.

O *Lord, thou art my God, my mighty Saviour and Deliverer; in thee will I put my Truſt, not doubting of thy Goodneſs to me in all my Fears and Dangers. I am brought very low, but thou art able to bear me up; and I will never deſpair of thy Kindneſs. Watch over me, I beſeech thee, for good. Make all my Bed in my Sickneſs. Sanctify this thy Viſitation to me. Teach me to improve it to thoſe good Ends and Purpoſes for which it was ſent, that whether by Life or Death, I may glorify thy holy Name. And grant that in either I may intirely give up my ſelf to thy Diſpoſal, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

Another for a due Preparation for Death.

IV.

O *Thou my good and gracious God, from whom all holy Deſires, all good Counſels, and all juſt Works do proceed, and without the Aſſiſtance of whoſe holy Spirit, it is not in me to think, ſpeak, or act as I ought to do; hearken, I beſeech thee, to the Prayer of the humble Supplicant, ſuffer no Corruption to remain in me, no Luſt or Paſſion to have any Dominion over me, but purge me from all my Guilt, and enable me to ſerve thee with a pure Heart, that being cleanſed* from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, *I may perfect Holineſs in thy* 2 Cor. 7. 1.

Fear, and have my Accounts in Readineſs whenſoever thou ſhalt pleaſe to call for them; that ſo Death, whenever it comes, may be no Surprize to me, but I may willingly leave this World, and reſign my Soul into thy Hands, as to a moſt loving and merciful Father, and when I ſhall come to appear before thy awful Tribunal, at the great tremendous Day, I may be ſet upon the Right Hand of our Lord and Judge, and may be ſentenced amongſt his true and faithful Diſciples, to everlaſting Bliſs in thy heavenly Kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for the ſake, and through the Merits of the ſame, thy Son Jeſus Chriſt, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

Theoph. I beſeech Almighty God to hear theſe your Prayers, and the Prayers of all your Friends for you; and not to take you out of this World, till he ſhall have fitted you for a better.

Anchith. I thank you for your good Wiſhes and Prayers; and do beg of you, and all my Friends, to continue your Prayers for me. I know not how ſoon my Soul may take its Flight into the other World; and I have great Need of God's Mercy and Goodneſs, without which I muſt inevitably be in a deſperate Condition. My Sins, my Sins cry aloud againſt me, my own Conſcience accuſes me, and God, who is greater than my Conſcience, and knows all my Sins, together with their ſeveral heinous Aggravations, may juſtly condemn me. Yet I will not deſpair of his Forgiveneſs. I will hope in his Mercy. He has *ſaid Help upon one that is mighty to ſave*, the ever bleſſed *Jeſus*, whom he gave to be a Propitiation for my Sins, and not for mine only, but

for

for the Sins of the whole World. In him therefore will I truſt, through him will I ſue for Pardon and Forgiveneſs, I will rely on his Merits and Satisfaction, for the Remiſſion of all my Sins, and the Supply of all Defects. And I doubt not but the good God will hearken to me, when I addreſs my ſelf to him, in the Name of ſuch an all-ſufficient and moſt powerful Interceſſor. In relation to whom he has expreſly declar'd, for our Comfort and Encouragement, that *he is not enter'd into the holy Places made with Hands, which are the Figures of the true, but into Heaven it ſelf, now to appear in the Preſence of God for us. He is exalted with the right Hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to* Iſrael, *and Remiſſion of Sins.* And *is able to ſave to the uttermoſt,* (εἰς τὸ παντελὲς, compleatly, intirely, as * *Heſychius*; or for ever, as † *Grotius* and Dr. *Hammond*) *all that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them. God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son,* to become incarnate, and live, and ſuffer and die for us, *to the end that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.* And our Lord himſelf has given us this Promiſe, that *thoſe who come unto him, he will in no wiſe caſt out.* This is my Comfort and great Support, and my main Relief againſt all Fears and Deſpondings, that how unworthy ſoever I be in my ſelf, and though I had ever ſo evidently, as indeed I have, deſerv'd the eternal Indignation of God in the Abyſs of Hell, yet my Redeemer has made abun-

1 St. John 2. 2. Hebr. 9. 24. Acts 5. 31. Hebr. 7. 25. St. John 3. 16. St. John 6. 37.

* In voce παντελὲς.
† In loc.

dant Satisfaction for all my Sins, and is now at the right Hand of God, pleading his own invaluable Merits in my Behalf. I will therefore Trust in him, in spight of all my own Iniquities and Sins, and will hope that upon my sincere Repentance, I shall be reinstated in God's Favour, and entitled to a Share in the most glorious, most inestimable, most transcendently Charming *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. I am not conscious of any Sin that I now retain any Affection for, any Lust or Passion that I have not unfeignedly renounc'd, and for which I am not truly humbled, nor any Duty, how difficult soever, that I am not resolv'd to perform, if it please God to allow me Time and Strength for it. And if he do not, I will promise my self he will graciously accept of such a Sorrow, as I have long had for my past Miscarriages, and such Vows and Resolutions of Obedience, as I have made, and have endeavour'd to fulfil according to my Power, though with great Weakness and Imperfection. This is my Consolation. And accordingly,

A Prayer

A Prayer for Growth in Grace.

I *Beſeech thee, O moſt merciful Lord God, confirm and encreaſe this Hope in me evermore. Give me ſuch a Repentance for all my Sins, as is not to be repented of; ſuch a ſteady Reliance upon Chriſt, as will never fail me; ſuch an Improvement in all Virtue, as may fit me for a better State, againſt I ſhall be taken hence.* Make me a clean Heart, O God; and renew a right Spirit within me. *Help all my Weakneſſes, and pity my Infirmities. Improve any good Beginning in me,* and work in me both to will and to do of thy good Pleaſure. *Let no Temptations prevail againſt me. And grant, O Lord, that* the more the outward Man decayeth, I may be ſtrengthened ſo much the more continually by thy holy Spirit in the inward Man, *and may be enabled to proceed from one Degree of Grace to another, till Grace ſhall at laſt be conſummated in everlaſting Glory;* through Jeſus Chriſt *our only Mediator and Redeemer.* Amen, Amen.

Pſal. 51. 10.

Phil. 2. 13.

Theoph. My good Friend, you do well, and as becomes a good Chriſtian, thus devoutly to recommend your Caſe to God, and put your Truſt in him.

Anchith. Do well in it! It is my neceſſary Duty, and what is indiſpenſably incumbent upon me, and every one that would be ſaved. And ſo you will be ſenſible whenever you come to be in my Condition.

Theoph. I acknowledge it, and am deſirous to encourage you in it, that *all your appointed Time* you may wait, and watch, and beg, and pray, and truſt, and hope, *till your Change come;*

come; to the end that then your Faith may be turn'd into Vision, and your Hope into Fruition, and all your Watching, and Labour, and Patience, may be rewarded with *a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away*.

Anchith. This is what I am aiming at, and endeavouring after. And I beseech Almighty God, that I may not miss of it.

Theoph. God grant your Request.

Anchith. Amen, Amen.

Theoph. As I came hither I was looking into Dr. *Comber*'s 4th Volume upon the Common-Prayer, where I met with something to our present Purpose, some few Directions, I mean, as to the making of our Wills; which pleas'd me well, and I believe will not be unacceptable to you. And being not long, if I shall not overtire you, I would read it to you.

Anchith. My Work is now over, and this will not occasion me to speak much; and therefore, if you please, I shall dispose my self to hearken to you.

Theoph. "Concerning this making of our "Will, says the Doctor, * these Cautions are "to be observ'd. *First*, That it be not de-"ferr'd till it be too late, lest we be op-"press'd with sudden Death, and leave our "Executors and Posterity involv'd in endless "Suits and Contentions, the Guilt whereof "will pursue those into another World, whose "wretched Carelessness was the dire Occasion "of all that Strife and Mischief. And though "we be not smitten with sudden Death, yet "we may fall into such a Distemper, as shall "seize on our Senses and Understanding, and

* Occasional Offices, p. 301, 302. Edit. Octavo, 1679.

" then we can either make no Diſtribution " of our Eſtate, or * none that will be valid. " Yet if neither of theſe happen, it is a great " Diſturbance to a languiſhing Man to rec- " kon, and caſt up, to ſettle and order his " Affairs; and a mighty Impediment to the " Exerciſes of Religion, wherein thoſe few " Days we have left, ought to be imploy'd; " and it may be obſerv'd, none have ſo quiet a " Mind, nor are ſo intent upon heavenly Things " as thoſe who have made their Wills in Time " of Health. It is therefore a grievous Folly, " and ſhameful Neglect at beſt, to defer this; " but if we put it off, becauſe we have no " Mind to think ſo ſeriouſly of Death, as this " will occaſion us to do, the Omiſſion then pro- " ceeds from Atheiſm and abominable Impi- " ety, and declares that the Man deſires his " only Portion here, and that he is ſo far from " preparing for Death, that he cannot endure " to think of it, *Eccluſ.* 41. 1. And as his " Fault is like that wretched Miſer's in the " Goſpel, (who till the very Moment of his " Death, perſwaded himſelf he ſhould live " and enjoy all himſelf,) ſo will his Fate in " all Probability be like his alſo, even to be " ſnatch'd away unready to a ſad Eternity, for " which he hath made no Proviſion, *Luke* 12. " 19, 20. *Secondly*, Another Part of our Du- " ty is, that when we do diſpoſe of our Eſtate, " we do it impartially, and by the Rules of

* *Teſtamentum ni perfectum fuerit, nullum eſt.* Gloſs. ad Grat. de Pœn. Diſt. 3.

In eo qui Teſtatur, ejus temporis quo Teſtamentum facit, integritas mentis exigitur. Dig. L. 28. Tit. 1. l. 2. Cod. Juſtin. L. 6. Tit. 22.

" Equity,

" Equity, not diſinheriting any of thoſe whom
" God hath made our Heirs, without Neceſ-
" ſity forces us thereunto, neither preferring
" one Child before another, unleſs ſome ex-
" traordinary Acts of Duty require it; nor
" leaving our Wives unprovided for, when
" we have conſum'd or diſpos'd of their For-
" tunes: Neither deſigning to defraud our
" Creditors of their juſt Demands. For if
" our laſt Act be unjuſt, we leave a Blot upon
" our Name here; and ſince we can never re-
" pent of this Wickedneſs, we can expect no-
" thing but a ſad Doom in the World whither
" we are going. *Laſtly*, We muſt make our
" Will with a chearful Mind, and freely lay
" down whatever we have in our Hands
" when God calls us. We muſt praiſe him
" that we had theſe Things while we needed
" them, and now that we have no longer Uſe
" for them, let us leave them (without repi-
" ning) to thoſe that come after us. We
" muſt not look back to *Egypt* now we are
" upon our March to *Canaan*; nor is there
" any Thing in theſe worldly Goods to de-
" ſerve it. They were Vanity and Vexation
" while we had them, and now we can have
" them no more; but if we part with them
" freely, we ſhall have a better Inheritance
" by far in exchange for them.

Anchith. This is very good Advice; and what I wiſh every one, that has any Thing to diſpoſe of, would be ſure to put in Practice. As I hope I have now done.

Theoph. Bleſſed be God that you have liv'd to do it.——— But I muſt not forget that it is high Time for me to withdraw. I thank God that you have been able to hold out ſo well under this Day's long Work. Now I ſhall

leave

leave you, that you may try to recover your Spirits, which muſt needs be much ſpent by ſo long an Exerciſe of them. Wherefore I heartily bid you good Night; and I pray God you may find your ſelf refreſh'd to Morrow, and that I may find you in a hopeful Way of Recovery on *Thurſday*, when I hope to ſee you again, with our other Friends that have appointed then to viſit you.

Anchith. Dear *Theophilus*, I am exceedingly obliged to you for all your Kindneſſes, and particularly for the long Trouble I have given you to Day. And I ſhall be ſtill farther in your Debt, for any Time you will pleaſe to ſpend with me, whilſt I am on this Side of the Grave. For you ſee I am in a weak Condition, and need the Comfort and Aſſiſtance of all my Friends; and I hope ſhall be the better for it to all Eternity.

Theoph. I wiſh I were capable of being more truly ſerviceable to you than I am. But aſſure your ſelf, my beſt Endeavours ſhall not be wanting. At preſent I take my Leave of you, but ſhall not fail to pray for you when I am gone.

Anchith. I beſeech you not to omit that Chriſtian-Office for me, for I have great Need of the hearty Prayers of all good People.

The End of the Third VISIT.

The

The Fourth VISIT.

How a Man may judge of his Interest in God's Favour, either Here, or Hereafter.

Euſebius. PRAY how is *Anchithanes* to Day?

Servant. Much as when you ſaw him laſt.

Euſeb. Is any Company with him?

Serv. Only *Theodorus*, who has juſt been at Prayer with him. Will you not pleaſe to walk in, Sir?

Euſeb. I am glad to hear, *Anchithanes*, that you are not worſe than when I ſaw you laſt; and to find ſo worthy a Perſon as *Theodorus* with you. And I wiſh I had come a little ſooner, that I might have join'd with him in praying for you. However, with *Theodorus*'s Leave, I would put you upon entreating a Favour of him, before he leaves you, that may be of Advantage to me as well as you.

Anchithanes. Pray what is that?

Theodorus. I am ſure I ſhall be very ready to do any Service in my Power to either of you.

Euſeb. You are always very kind, which makes me take this Freedom, in hope you will not be diſpleas'd at it.

Anchith. Pray what is it you would have me entreat of *Theodorus*?

Euſeb. When *Theophilus* and the reſt of us were here ſome Days ſince, you deſir'd our Reſolution of a Doubt much fitter for *Theodorus*'s Opinion than ours; and which I heartily wiſh to hear reſolv'd by him.

Anchith.

Anchith. I very well remember it; and if his Occaſions will permit, I will treſpaſs ſo far upon his Goodneſs, as to beg his Information concerning it, it being a Matter of great Importance to all; but more eſpecially to thoſe in my preſent Circumſtances.

Theod. Be pleas'd to propoſe your Queſtion; and I will give you the beſt Satisfaction I can concerning it.

Anchith. It is this; *How I may make a right Judgment of my Intereſt in God's Favour, either at preſent, or in relation to a future* State.

Theod. A weighty Queſtion indeed. And which I ſhould be glad to have oftner propoſed to me by thoſe in your Condition. But it is the miſerable Unhappineſs and Folly of the Generality of Mankind, that they are not ſo ſenſible, either of their Duty, or their Intereſt, as you appear to be.

Anchith. I am ſure it highly concerns me to be ſo. And beg therefore that you will add to all your other Kindneſſes, this which *Euſebius* has put me upon asking of you; as I had before ask'd it of himſelf, and ſome other good Friends, that promis'd to come and ſee me.

Theod. Your Queſtion conſiſts of Two different Parts, the one relating to this preſent, and the other to a future Life. And I ſuppoſe you deſire I ſhould ſpeak to both of them.

Anchith. If it will not be too great a Trouble to you. As I hope it will not, after the Experience I have had of the Delight you take in doing Good.

Theod. Aſſure your ſelf, *Anchithanes*, any Service I can do you, will be no Trouble to me. But this ought by no Means to be ſo, becauſe it is only a Part of my Miniſterial Office,

fice, and what I am oblig'd to do for any of my Pariſhioners that ſhall deſire it of me. I begin with the former Part of your Enquiry.

Anchith. If you pleaſe.

God's Corrections no certain Sign of his Diſpleaſure.

Theod. Then I muſt tell you, you are not to imagine that God is at Enmity with you, becauſe he thinks fit, for what wiſe Reaſons you know not, to lay his Hand thus heavy upon you. It is rather a Sign of his Affection to you, or any of us, and his paternal Care over us, that he condeſcends to correct us in this World, to the end we may repent, may acknowledge our Faults, and amend our Lives, and ſue for Mercy and Forgiveneſs, and *Grace to help in Time of Need*; that ſo by Means of our temporal Afflictions and Calamities, we may *die to the Sins* for which we are thus puniſhed, *and riſe again to Newneſs of Life*; and ſo may eſcape the everlaſting Plagues of the other World, and may never come into

Rev. 21.8. *the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone*, but

2 St. Pet. 1. 11. may have *an Entrance miniſtred unto us abundantly, into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* We have the Authority of St. *Paul* for it, that when we are puniſh'd in like mannner as the *Corinthians* were, for their groſs Abuſe of the Lord's Supper, of whom he profeſſes that divers were ſeiz'd with Sickneſs, and others with Death; when we are thus puniſh'd, God does it, ſays the Apoſtle, not out of irreconcileable Diſpleaſure, and for our Deſtruction, but in Way of Kindneſs, and

1 Cor. 11. 32. in order to our eternal Salvation. For *when we are judg'd, we are chaſten'd of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemn'd with the World.* When God ſuffers the Sinner to flouriſh in his Wickedneſs, ſaying concerning him as he did of *Ephraim*, after he was *joined with Idols, Let him alone*;

alone; when he gives him up to follow his own Heart's Ways, and to *add Iniquity to Iniquity*, till *the Meaſure of his Sins be fill'd up*, it is a terrible Evidence, that ſuch an one is reſerv'd for the Pains of the World to come, and that *Weeping, and Wailing, and Gnaſhing of Teeth*, will be his everlaſting Portion. Our bleſſed Saviour denounces a miſerable End, to ſuch as abounded in the good Things of this World, but took not Care to do good with them, or to ſerve and pleaſe God the Giver of them, and ſo to prepare themſelves for a better State. *Wo unto you that are rich; for ye have receiv'd your Conſolation. Wo unto you that are full; for ye ſhall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now; for ye ſhall mourn and weep.* And no Doubt a wretched Portion muſt therefore await all ſuch in the other Life, as are ſuffer'd to proceed licentiouſly, and without Controul, in their Sins, in this. St. Luke 6. 24, 25.

Anchith. How comes it then to paſs, that this Truth is ſo little taken Notice of? The Generality of Men eſteem thoſe moſt belov'd of God, who live in all Kind of Wealth and Pleaſure, and never taſt of any obſervable Adverſity all their Days.

Theod. True; but the Scripture gives us another Notion of them, aſſuring us, * *There is no Peace, no real and laſting Peace, to the Wicked*, how proſperous ſoever their outward Eſtate may be. See what a Character the Pſalmiſt gives of them, and of their tottering changeable Condition. *I was grieved*, ſays he, *at the Wicked: I do alſo ſee the Ungodly in ſuch Proſperity. For they are in no Peril of Death: But are luſty and ſtrong. They come in no Misfortune like other Folk, neither are they plagu'd like other Men. And this is the Cauſe they are ſo holden* *The dangerous State of the proſperous Sinner.* * Iſ. 57. 21. Pſal. 73. 3. &c.

with Pride; and overwhelm'd with Cruelty. Their Eyes ſwell with Fatneſs, and they do even what they luſt. Then thought I to underſtand this; but it was too hard for me. Until I went into the Sanctuary of God; then underſtood I the End of theſe Men. Namely, how thou doſt ſet them in ſlippery Places, and caſteſt them down and deſtroyeſt them. Oh how ſuddenly do they conſume, periſh, and come to a fearful End! And at another Time, *I my ſelf have ſeen the Ungodly in great Power, and flouriſhing like a green Bay-Tree. I went by, and lo he was gone: I ſought him, but his Place could no where be found. Keep Innocence, and take heed to the Thing that is right; for that ſhall bring a Man Peace at the laſt. As for the Tranſgreſſors, they ſhall periſh together. And the End of the Ungodly is, that they ſhall be rooted out at the laſt.*

Ver. 15, 16, 17, 18.

Pſal. 37. 35, 36, 37, 38.

Euſeb. The holy Scripture, and eſpecially that moſt ſeraphick Book of *Pſalms*, abounds with Places to this Purpoſe.

Theod. You ſay true. But that I may not be tedious, I will add but Two Paſſages more at preſent. And they are both from the Apoſtle St. *James*, in his Catholick Epiſtle. Who ſpeaking of the rich Man, affirms, that *as the Flower of the Graſs, he paſſeth away. For the Sun is no ſooner riſen with a burning Heat, but it withereth the Graſs, and the Flower thereof falleth, and the Grace of the Faſhion thereof periſheth; ſo alſo ſhall the rich Man fade away in his Ways.* And again to the ſame Effect, *Go to now ye rich Men, weep, and howl for the Miſeries that ſhall come upon you. Your Riches are corrupted, and your Garments are Moth-eaten. Your Gold and Silver is cankered; and the Ruſt of them ſhall be a Witneſs againſt you, and ſhall eat your Fleſh as it were Fire: Ye have heap'd Treaſure together for the laſt*

St. James 1. 10, 11.

Chap. 5. 1, &c.

laſt Days. Behold the Hire of the Labourers, which have reaped down your Fields, which is of you kept back by Fraud, crieth; and the Cries of them which have reap'd are enter'd into the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have liv'd in Pleaſure on the Earth, and been wanton; you have nouriſh'd your Hearts, as in the Day of Slaughter. That is, as the learned Dr. *Hammond* paraphraſes upon the Words, *You have pamper'd your ſelves, as it were for the Shambles.* Whereby is plainly intimated to us, that the End of ſuch as had liv'd in the greateſt Plenty, and Eaſe, is oftentimes very miſerable. And by Conſequence, all their temporal Advantages, above others, are very far from proving them the Favourites of Heaven. This is what, under God, depends upon the Diſpoſition of their own Minds, and the Care they take to obey and ſerve God; *without which*, how great ſoever they be in this World, they know aſſuredly before-hand, that *they ſhall never ſee the Lord* in that which is to come. Hebr. 12. 14.

Euſeb. So true is that of the Author of the Book of Wiſdom. *The Hope of the Ungodly is like Duſt, that is blown away with the Wind, like a thin Froth that is driven away with the Storm; like as the Smoak, that is diſpers'd here and there with a Tempeſt, and paſſeth away as the Remembrance of a Gueſt, that tarrieth but a Day. But the Righteous live for evermore, their Reward is with the Lord, and the Care of them is with the moſt high. Therefore ſhall they receive a glorious Kingdom, and a beautiful Crown, from the Lord's Hand; for with his right Hand ſhall he cover them, and with his Arm ſhall he protect them.* Wiſd. 5. 14, 15, 16.

Theod. So that it is eaſy to obſerve how deplorable the Condition often is, of ſuch as the World are wont to magnify and applaud, to reverence and almoſt adore them: Or elſe to

malign and envy them for their Greatneſs. Who yet, if rightly conſider'd, would more deſervedly be the Objects of a ſincere and hearty Compaſſion, notwithſtanding all their outward Splendor. Whilſt on the other Hand, ſuch as theſe haughty Worldlings ſeem moſt to deſpiſe, are many Times in an infinitely more deſirable Condition, than themſelves.

The happy Condition of the Poor and Afflicted.

St. James 2. 5. *Hearken, my beloved Brethren,* ſays St. *James; Hath not God choſen the Poor of this World rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promiſ'd to them that love him?* And the ſame Apoſtle pronounces a Bleſſing to him that undergoes Afflictions, for the Trial and Exerciſe of his Chriſtian Virtues, and perhaps ſuffers the Loſs of all he had, for his faithful Adherence to his Duty; that he ſhall have the Approbation of God, and as a Conſequent hereof, ſhall be made everlaſtingly Happy in the other State. Chap. 1. 12. *Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation, for when he is tried he ſhall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promiſ'd to them that love him.* And there is great Reaſon why ſuch Sufferings ſhould be expected to have this happy Event, amongſt others upon this Account, that whilſt People ſwim in Eaſe and Pleaſure, and have all Things to their Heart's Deſire, whilſt as it is ſaid to have far'd with * Q. *Metellus*, their whole Life is but one continu'd Series of Proſperity, without any Misfortunes, Diſappointments, or Loſſes, they are apt to be enamour'd of their temporal Enjoyments, and too often aim at no greater Happineſs, undervaluing and neglecting the other moſt laſting State, which they ought

* Valer. Maxim. l. 7. c. 1.

much

much rather to be inceſſantly labouring after. Had the *Iſraelites* been patroniz'd and encourag'd in *Egypt*, and allow'd a free and quiet Enjoyment of the good Things thereof, there is little Reaſon to doubt but they would have been for taking up their Reſt there, without ever deſiring to return to the promis'd *Canaan*. It was only their hard Bondage, and the cruel Uſage they met with from their unmerciful Task-Maſters, that made them long for a Removal into another Country. In like manner, when the Chriſtian has his *Lot fall to him in a fair Ground and a goodly Heritage*, when his Circumſtances ſuit his Deſires, and he has few or no Croſſes to complain of, this is a powerful Temptation to him to grow Regardleſs of another Life, for which he has no Mind to exchange this. And there are but few that will be at the Pains of providing for their Departure hence, without ſome Afflictions to awaken their lethargick Minds, and put them upon *deſiring a better Country, that is a heavenly*; ſuch a Country, whoſe Happineſs ſhall not equal only, but exceed their utmoſt Deſires and Imaginations; *Where they ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, neither ſhall the Sun light on them, nor any heat; but the Lamb that is in the midſt of the Throne ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them to living Fountains of Water; and God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.* This World's Delights are of an inſinuating Nature, and debaſe the Soul, and clog it in its Aſcent towards Heaven, and make Men willing to pitch their Tents here, without troubling themſelves for what may happen beyond the Grave. Hence it is we ſee all Mankind, a very few excepted, ſo *cumber'd* with *Martha*, *about many Things* of leſs Moment, as in the mean Time

Hebr. 11. 16.

Rev. 7. 16, 17.

St. Luke 10. 41, 42.

to neglect *the one Thing needful, that good Part which ſhall not be taken away* from any of thoſe that once attain to it. The Uneaſineſs of our preſent Station may perhaps incline us to ſeek after another, which we hope may be more commodious and beneficial, and ſo may become a Means of inviting us to have *our Converſation in Heaven*, and may bring us to *look* paſt *the Things which are ſeen*, to thoſe *which are not ſeen*, which are eternal, and ſo will never fail us. But till we meet with ſome ſuch Remembrancer to put us in Mind of our Duty, how ſadly do we ordinarily immerſe our ſelves in the Cares of the World, and delight our ſelves in the Acquiſition of this Life's Tranſitory Advantages, as if we had never been born for another, nor were ever call'd upon, and entreated and encouraged to ſeek after it?

Euſeb. This being the happy Effect of Afflictions in general, it is eaſy to apply the Conſideration thereof to the Caſe of our Friend here in Bed.

The Uſefulneſs of Sickneſs.

Theod. It is ſo. For if all Afflictions and Sufferings have a natural Tendency to fit us for the heavenly Felicity, Sickneſs in particular, and corporal Infirmities, may well be looked upon as peculiarly conducing hereto. Becauſe theſe not only ſerve to convince us of the Inſufficiency and Uncertainty of all worldly Attainments, and how little they are to be depended upon; but moreover are particularly adapted to remind us of our Mortality, and that great Change which is every Day approaching nearer and nearer to each one of us. For, if we cannot promiſe our ſelves any Certainty of continuing in this Life, for a Day's, or but an Hour's Space, though in our perfecteſt Health and Strength, much leſs may any

any preſume to do it, when their Spirits are exhauſted, their Fleſh and Strength waſted, and their Breath grown ſhort and painful, and it is a great Queſtion whether ever they ſhall be well again: This will naturally carry our Meditations forward to another Life, and ought certainly to draw off our Minds, our Thoughts and Deſires from this World, out of which we know not how quickly we may be taken; and to make us ſolicitous for *a better and an enduring Subſtance* in the other, wherein we are undoubtedly to be fix'd to all Eternity. And is it not a ſingular Inſtance of Mercy and Compaſſion in Almighty God, thus to warn us of our Frailty, the timely Conſideration whereof may be of ſuch vaſt Advantage to us for evermore? Who would ever blame ſo tender a Benefactor, for taking too much Care of him, or being too forward to fit and prepare him for the Kingdom of Heaven? Theſe Viſitations, though uneaſy to ſuch as feel the Smart of them, may, and if rightly improv'd will, be of everlaſting Benefit to them. And if this be an Unkindneſs, we may complain of God as unkind, whenſoever he is pleas'd to confine us to our Bed. But on the other Hand, if Sickneſs be only a ſalutary Medicine for rectifying the Evils and Diſtempers of the Soul, and qualifying the Patient for the moſt ineſtimable Kindneſs he is capable of receiving; he muſt be highly to blame, that can ſuffer himſelf to murmur at Almighty God, for ſuch a gracious Method of Procedure with him.

Euſeb. Happy therefore is the Man, that is not only thus viſited by God, but knows alſo how to make a right Uſe of what is laid upon him, ſo as that after his Departure hence, he

may attain to that unspeakable, unconceivable Joy, which *no Man can take from him*. *Bildad.* Happy indeed, thrice Happy is he, and highly blessed of God, that so carries himself upon his Sick-Bed, as that he may be fit either for Life or Death; to live to God's Glory, if restor'd to Health, or to enter upon a heavenly Inheritance, if he shall be translated hence.

Anchith. Oh that I may be found in this Number; that, poor guilty Sinner as I am, I may bear my Sickness as I ought, and may be fitted by it for a better State!

A Prayer for a right Christian Deportment in Time of Sickness.

O *Blessed and glorious Lord God, who delightest not in the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he turn from his Wickedness and live; and who dost not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men; look graciously upon me thine unworthy Servant, lying here in great Weakness of Body. Speak Peace to my Soul, and assure me that thou art reconcil'd to me, and wilt forgive me all mine Offences. Teach me also to behave my self under thy Chastisement, as becomes the State whereto thou hast reduc'd me. Wean my Heart from the World, and all those transitory Enjoyments in it, which are of so little Advantage to me now, and which I must be sure to leave behind me, whensoever I shall be taken hence. Fit me for whatever thou designest for me, whether in this, or in another World. And whether it be to live or die, let my Heart be entirely resigned to thy most wise Determination concerning me. Renew in me, most loving Father, whatsoever is decay'd by*

the Fraud and Malice of the Devil, or by my own carnal Will and Frailneſs. Continue me in the Unity of the Church, and the true Faith of the Goſpel, that I neither fall into Schiſm, nor Hereſy, nor Sin of any Kind. Conſider my Contrition; accept my Tears; and aſſwage my Pain, as ſhall ſeem to thee moſt expedient for me. Enable me in all Caſes ſtedfaſtly to rely upon thy Promiſes, and never to diſtruſt thy Care of thoſe that put their Truſt in thee. Hear me for my ſelf, and hear all thoſe that pray for me. Watch over me continually for good. And never leave me, nor forſake me, till thou ſhalt have fitted me for, and brought me to thy heavenly Kingdom, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

Theod. God, infinitely good and gracious, grant your Heart's Deſire. But as to what I was ſaying concerning the Happineſs of thoſe who carry themſelves aright upon their Sick-Bed, give me Leave, *Anchithanes*, to recommend to your ſerious Conſideration and Practice, Biſhop *Taylor*'s Advice in his *Rules and Exerciſes of Holy Dying*.* *Be confident, that although God often ſends Pardon without Correction, yet he never ſends Correction without Pardon, unleſs it be thy Fault: And therefore take every or any Affliction, as an Earneſt-Penny of thy Pardon: And upon Condition there may be Pardon with God, let any Thing be welcome, that he can ſend as its Inſtrument, or Condition. Suffer God to chooſe his own Circumſtances of Adopting thee, and be content to be under Diſcipline, when the Reward of that is to become the Son of God.*† *We may reckon Sickneſs amongſt good Things, as we reckon*

* Chap. 3. Sect. 5. N. 6.

† Sect. 6. N. 3.

Rhubarb, and Aloes, and Child-birth, and Labour, and Obedience, and Diſcipline. Theſe are unpleaſant, and yet ſafe; they are Troubles in order to Bleſſings, or they are Securities from Danger, or the hard Choices of a leſs and more tolerable Evil.

God's Mercy to Sinners a good Ground of Comfort.

Anchith. I am not without ſome Hope, that though Almighty God juſtly puniſhes me for my Sin, yet he will not totally take away his Mercy from me.

Theod. Take Courage, good *Anchithanes*; and do not ſuffer your ſelf to be overwhelm'd with needleſs Fears and Jealouſies. Aſſure your ſelf, that how many, and how great ſoever your Sins be, the Mercies of God are more and greater. He is a God of infinite Commiſeration, and *mighty to ſave, merciful, and gracious, long-ſuffering, abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin.* And though he *will not clear the Guilty,* yet is he ready to *ſhew Mercy unto Thouſands of them that love him, and keep his Commandments.* His *Loving-kindneſs has been ever of old.* Yet has his Pity and Compaſſion, and his Willingneſs to be reconcil'd to Fallen Man, been incomparably more glorioufly diſplay'd by the Goſpel of our bleſſed Saviour, who has *conſecrated for us a new and living Way through the Veil, that is to ſay, his Fleſh,* aſſumed at his Incarnation, and at length offer'd upon the Croſs for us; and has over and over promis'd free Pardon and Forgiveneſs, to ſuch as with an humble and truly penitent Heart, ſue for it through his Mediation. *He is a Prince and a Saviour, exalted by God's right Hand,* and empower'd *to give Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins.* And *thoſe that come to him,* as they ought, *he will in no wiſe caſt out.* This is reviving News to a diſconſolate Soul, an enlivening Medi-

If. 63. 1. Exod. 34. 6, 7. Exod. 20. 6. Pſal. 25. 5. Hebr. 10. 20. Acts 5. 31. St. John 6. 37.

cine

cine for a dejected Mind. And you ought to ſupport your ſelf with the Thoughts of ſuch ineſtimable Condeſcention, and not to doubt but upon your true Faith, and ſincere Repentance, you will receive the Benefit of all our Lord has thus graciouſly done and ſuffer'd for you.

Anchith. God grant I may. I am unfeignedly ſorry for all my Tranſgreſſions, and deſirous to amend and walk more holily for the future, if it ſhall pleaſe God to allow me a farther Time of Trial. And I do beg of God, through *Jeſus Chriſt* my Redeemer, to look in Mercy upon me, a poor, helpleſs, guilty, wretched Sinner, that have vilely offended him, and given him juſt Occaſion to cut me off, and *ſwear in his Wrath that I ſhall never enter into his Reſt.* And I am fully ſatisfied of the Efficacy of my Saviour's Sufferings, and the Atonement thereby made for all Mankind. But ſtill my Fear is, that I am not ſo qualified, as to have juſt Grounds to conclude, that the Promiſes of the Goſpel belong to me.

Euſeb. Take Care, I beſeech you, that you do not wrong your ſelf, by a cauſeleſs Diſtruſt of that abundant Goodneſs, that has made you. Remember it is moſt certain, that wherever Repentance and Faith are, there are likewiſe God's Mercy, Favour, and Loving-kindneſs, and as an undoubted Conſequent thereof, the Pardon of Sin, and a Title to Salvation. *Becauſe he conſidereth*, ſaith the Prophet *Ezekiel, and turneth away from all his Tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die.* And again, *Repent and turn your ſelves from all your Tranſgreſſions, ſo Iniquity ſhall not be your Ruin.* And to the ſame Purpoſe ſays St. *Peter, Repent and be converted,* Ezek. 18. 29. Ver. 30. Acts 3. 19.

that

St. John 11. 25, 26. *that your Sins may be blotted out.* And *he that believeth on me,* saith our Saviour, *though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.* And at another Time, *God so lov'd the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that whosoever believeth in him,* that is, so as to obey his Commands, as well as to hope for Salvation by his Means, as is abundantly evident from the whole Intent and Design of the Gospel, as well as from numerous particular Texts in it; that whosoever thus believes in him, *should not perish, but have everlasting Life. For God sent not his Son into the World, to condemn the World, but that the World through him might be sav'd.*

St. John 3. 16, 17.

Anchith. These are very comfortable Sayings; God give me Grace never to forget them.

Theod. There is another highly encouraging Passage in the Gospel, which I would entreat you not to forget.

Anchith. Pray what is it? I will take Care to remember it.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son consider'd.

Theod. I mean what St. *Luke* relates of the Prodigal Son, to whose Sins I perswade my self you will not pretend to equal yours; and yet he found Mercy upon his Return; and to that Degree, that our Saviour tells us upon this Occasion, not only, that *there is Joy in the Presence of the Angels of God over a Sinner that repenteth,* but even, *that there shall be more Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth, than over Ninety and Nine just Persons, that need no Repentance.* So kind, so ready is our good and gracious God, to receive a returning Sinner into his Favour, that he seems almost to be better pleas'd with such an one's Recovery, than if he had never gone astray.

St. Luke 15. 10.

Ver. 7.

Eusch.

Euseb. That Parable of the returning Prodigal is of singular Importance. It is in * *Grotius's* Judgment, *the most famous of all our Saviour's Parables, the most affectionate, and set forth in the liveliest Colours.*

Theod. And not without Reason. For in it we have describ'd to us, the Evil and Mischief of a vicious Course of Life, the admirable Efficacy and Advantage of Repentance, the immense Benignity and Compassion of Almighty God to relenting, returning Sinners, and the astonishing Kindness and Affection wherewith he receives them upon their Return. See here an unbridled Youth, in the midst of his juvenile Heat and Activity, casting off the Yoke, that he might the more securely, and with the less Fear or Interruption pursue his licentious sinful Inclinations, *going into a far Country*, to be at a Distance from his aged Father, so as neither to be under his Eye, nor be disturb'd by such wholesome Advice as he had resolv'd before-hand not to attend to, or be influenc'd by. See him taking his fill of sensual Pleasures, studying all the most extravagant Gratifications of an unbridled Lust, spending his Estate *in riotous Living*, and *with Harlots*, without any Thought of returning to Himself, or to his native Country, and his Father's House, till meer Necessity, and the dreadful Misery he had thus senseleſly brought upon himself, forced him to it. See him who had thus thoughtlesly wasted his Portion in all Manner of Excess, expos'd in a while (as it ordinarily hap-

St. Luke 15. 13, & 30.

* Inter omnes Christi parabolas eximia, plena affectuum, & pulcherrimis picta Coloribus. *Grot.* in V. 20.

pens

pens to the Intemperate and Debauched) to the Extremity of Want and Penury, thruſt out of his coſtly Lodgings, diveſted of his glittering Attire, at the utmoſt Loſs for meer Neceſſaries for his Subſiſtance, conſtrained to earn his Bread in the Sweat of his Brows, and in the moſt ſervile and abject Manner, by *feeding the Swine*, and even brought ſo low as to deſire that he might partake of the ſame Food with them, *and no Man gave unto him.* See him again wrought upon by theſe diſmal Effects of his Folly, and deſirous to humble himſelf to his offended Father, in the moſt ſubmiſſive Manner, that, if poſſible, he might obtain Admittance into his Family, though it were but in Quality of one of his Under-Servants, rather than periſh with Hunger in a foreign Nation. For thus he began to reaſon with himſelf: How is it, that I, who have indeed deſerv'd my Father's utmoſt Indignation, that he ſhould no longer own me for his Son, ſeeing I have ſo ſhamefully abus'd his Kindneſs and Bounty to me; yet know his Goodneſs to be ſuch, that I cannot doubt but he will take ſome Notice of me, and receive me I hope into his Houſe again, though it were but in the Place of one of the meaneſt of his Attendants; where at leaſt I may be ſupplied with thoſe Neceſſaries my Nature calls for, and not linger out my Time, as I do here, pinched with Hunger, and choaked with Thirſt; how is it that I thus ſenſeleſly continue to prolong my Miſery, without ſeeking that Redreſs, which I can hardly fail of upon my Repentance. Why do I delay to implore ſo kind a Father's Pardon, that I may not remain deſtitute of thoſe Conveniencies, and that Proviſion of Food, which all that belong to him are furniſh'd

St. Luke 15. 15, 16.

niſh'd with? I will no longer thus obſtinately puniſh my ſelf, but will try the tender Bowels of a compaſſionate Parent, in hope he will not reject me when I do ſo. *How many hired Servants of my Father's have Bread enough, and to ſpare, and I periſh with Hunger? I will ariſe and go to my Father, and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son; make me as one of thy hired Servants.* And now behold the wonderful Compaſſion of Almighty God to penitent Sinners, lively repreſented in the Father's joyful Reception of this former Reprobate. His Diſpleaſure againſt ſo undutiful a Son is immediately laid aſide, upon the firſt Appearance of Amendment. His Bowels preſently yern towards him, and in a manner prevent the Prodigals Humiliation, and Confeſſion of his paſt Wickedneſs. He could not ſuffer himſelf to ſtay for the others coming to him; but as ſoon as ever he diſcovered him at a Diſtance, ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, his Heart was moved within him, and he was all diſſolved into Love and Pity, and haſtened above the uſual Pace of a Father, eſpecially when going to meet a Child, and more eſpecially again ſuch an undutiful, graceleſs, unworthy Child as this had been. He had not Patience to ſtay for his Son's Approach, much leſs could he find in his Heart to withdraw himſelf, as one that was angry. His Reſentment was all buried in a ſpeedy Oblivion; and nothing now appear'd, but the fondeſt Careſſes of one who had ſo little deſerv'd them, and againſt whom he had been ſo juſtly, ſo lately, and ſo highly incenſed. All on a ſudden, nothing was to be ſeen but Joy and Gladneſs, and the heartieſt Endearments, together with all other

St. Luke 15. 17, 18, 19.

Tokens

Tokens of Mirth, for the Recovery of a loſt Child. *When he was yet a great Way off, his Father ſaw him, and had Compaſſion, and ran, and fell on his Neck, and kiſſed him; and ſaid to his Servants, Bring forth the beſt Robe, and put it on him, and put a Ring on his Finger, and Shoes on his Feet. And bring hither the fatted Calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry. For this my Son was dead, and is alive again, and was loſt, and is found.* A comfortable Reſemblance of the infinite Mercy of our heavenly Father, and his ineffable Commiſeration for the greateſt of Sinners, and the Certainty they may promiſe themſelves of a favourable Acceptance with him, ſo they do but renounce their ſinful Courſes, and walk as becomes the holy Profeſſion they have taken upon them. Let them but *repent*, and *turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance*, and they need not fear that he will ſhew himſelf irreconcilable to them. On the contrary, they may encourage themſelves with a well-grounded Expectation, of a gracious Reception, and of great Joy and Rejoicing in Heaven at their Converſion. Whenever they *come to themſelves*, and are diſpos'd to return to their provok'd Father, acknowledging their Offences, and repenting of all their Riot and Exceſs, and all the Wickedneſs they had fallen into, they will find him more ready to forgive, than they are to ſue to him for Forgiveneſs. When the Prodigal did but make ſome Advance towards his Father, whilſt he was yet at a Diſtance, the Father impatient of Delay, runs to him, embraces, and kiſſes him, with the utmoſt Affection, and entertains him with Joy; and that no ordinary and common Joy, but even more than if, after the Example of his elder Brother, he had

St. Luke 15. 20.

Ver. 22. 23.

Acts 26. 20.

had all along continued with, and been dutiful to him.

Anchith. Oh the great, the exceeding great, and infinite Goodneſs of Almighty God!

Theod. Here you ſee that verified, which was ſpoken in the Old Teſtament, by the Mouth of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Return you backſliding Iſrael, ſaith the Lord, and I will not cauſe mine Anger to fall upon you: For I am merciful, ſaith the Lord, and I will not keep Anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine Iniquity, that thou haſt tranſgreſs'd, and haſt ſcatter'd thy Ways to the Strangers under every green Tree, and ye have not obey'd my Voice, ſaith the Lord. Turn, O backſliding Children, ſaith the Lord, for I am married unto you: And I will take you one of a City, and two of a Family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you Paſtors according to mine Heart, which ſhall feed you with Knowledge and Underſtanding.* And a little after, *Return ye backſliding Children, and I will heal your Backſlidings.* As he alſo ſaith by another Prophet, *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no Pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil Ways; for why will ye die, O Houſe of Iſrael? The Righteouſneſs of the Righteous ſhall not deliver him, in the Day of his Tranſgreſſion: As for the Wickedneſs of the Wicked, he ſhall not fall thereby in the Day that he turneth from his Wickedneſs.* And again, *Caſt away from you all your Tranſgreſſions, whereby ye have tranſgreſſed, and make you a new Heart, and a new Spirit; for why will ye die, O Houſe of Iſrael? For I have no Pleaſure in the Death of him that dieth, ſaith the Lord God: Wherefore turn your ſelves, and live ye.*

Jer. 3. 12, 13, 14, 15.

Ver. 22.

Ezek. 33. 11, 12.

Chap. 18. 31, 32.

Anchith.

Anchith. True; but theſe Words were ſpoken to the *Jews*; and how ſhall I be ſure they relate to us as well as unto them.

God's Promiſes relate to us as well as to the Jews.

Theod. Beſides what I have ſaid concerning the Parable now inſiſted upon; which was ſpoken by our Saviour to his Diſciples, and ſo plainly teſtifies the great Love of God to penitent Sinners amongſt us Chriſtians; beſides this, I ſay, you will eaſily anſwer this Doubt your ſelf, if you but attend a while to what the Apoſtles have ſpoken in relation to it. Of a Truth, ſays St. *Peter*, *I perceive that God is no Reſpecter of Perſons; but in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.* Agreeably whereto St. *Paul* argues, *Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not alſo of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles alſo. Seeing it is one God which ſhall juſtify the Circumciſion by Faith, and the Uncircumciſion through Faith.* And in another Place, *There is no Difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the ſame Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whoſoever ſhall call on the Name of the Lord, ſhall be ſav'd.* And again, ſaith the ſame Apoſtle, *Whatſoever Things were written aforetime, were written for our Learning, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope.* And yet more fully, *Remember that ye being in Time paſt Gentiles in the Fleſh, who are call'd Uncircumciſion by that which is call'd the Circumciſion in the Fleſh made with Hands; That at that Time ye were without Chriſt, being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Iſrael, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promiſe, having no Hope, and without God in the World: But now in Chriſt Jeſus, ye who ſometimes were far off, are made nigh by the Blood of Chriſt. For he is our Peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle Wall of Partition*

Acts 10. 34, 35.

Rom. 3. 29, 30.

Chap. 10. 12, 13.

Chap. 15. 4.

Epheſ. 2. 11, &c.

tition between us; having aboliſh'd in his Fleſh the Enmity, even the Law of Commandments contain'd in Ordinances, for to make in himſelf of twain one new Man, ſo making Peace, and that he might reconcile both unto God, in one Body by the Croſs, having ſlain the Enmity thereby; and came and preach'd Peace to you that were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have an Acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore, ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God: And are built upon the Foundations of the Apoſtles, and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the Chief Corner-Stone: In whom all the Building fitly fram'd together, groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord. In whom you alſo are builded together, for an Habitation of God through the Spirit.

Anchith For ever bleſſed be the Lord our God; who hath made us Gentiles Partakers of his heavenly Bleſſings, through Chriſt.

Euſeb. There is no Cauſe of Deſpair for any Penitent, how heinous ſoever his Sins have been. * *For the Son of Man came to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.* And "a Man's be- "ing a Heathen, or a Publican, or a Sinner, "in his former Life, (as the learn'd Dr. *Hammond* paraphraſes upon theſe Words) "doth "not render him incapable of receiving Be- "nefit by our Lord, but contrariwiſe gives "him a Capacity of it upon his Repentance. "For this was the End of Chriſt's coming, "namely, to reduce Sinners to Repentance, "and to obtain Mercy for ſuch. *He is the Lamb of God, that takes away the Sins of the World*, both the Guilt and the Puniſhment of them. "Who was ſlain, ſays another learn-

No Cauſe of Deſpair for any Penitent.

* St. Luke 19. 10.

St. John 1. 29.

" ed Commentator *, as a piacular Victim, to " redeem us to God by his Blood, to procure " us the Remiſſion of Sins, and to exempt all " that believe in him from the Sentence of " Death, which came upon the World for the " Sin of *Adam*. I add, and for all thoſe numerous actual Tranſgreſſions, whereof every one of us is guilty before him. So that now, *if any Man* fall into whatſoever Sort of *Sin, we have a* powerful *Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*, the holy and juſt one, in whom alone was no Sin, *and he is a Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but for the Sins of the whole World.*

1 St. Joh. 2. 1, 2.

Anchith. Therefore I will truſt in God thro' Chriſt my Redeemer and Interceſſor. And whether he puniſhes me for the Trial of my Faith, or for my Sins, that by this Means he may reclaim me from them, or for whatſoever other Cauſe, I will take the Boldneſs to call upon him, with Hope of Mercy from him.

Theod. Undoubtedly you may, and ought to do it. He has both commanded it, and promis'd to hear you when you do it.

Anchith. Where is that Commandment, or that Promiſe, to be found in Scripture?

God requires to call upon him, with Hope of Mercy from him.

Theod. In divers Places, both of the Old and New Teſtament. But to avoid Prolixity, I ſhall give you only an Inſtance out of each. As to the former, * *Call upon me in the Time of Trouble*, ſays God by the Pſalmiſt, *ſo will I hear thee, and thou ſhalt praiſe me*; or as it is in the other Tranſlation, *I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.* Here God not only requires to ſeek to him in Time of Affliction, but pro-

* Pſal. 50. 15.

* Dr. *Whitby* in loc.

miſes

miſes a gracious Anſwer to the Prayers thus put up to him. And as to the other, it is the Apoſtle St. *Paul*'s Direction, whatever your Grievances be, to *be careful*, anxiouſly ſolicitous, *for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thankſgiving, to let your Requeſts be made known unto God.* And then it follows, *The Peace*, the Love and Favour, *of God, which paſſeth all Underſtanding, ſhall keep your Hearts and Minds through Chriſt Jeſus*; you ſhall be preſerv'd firm and ſtedfaſt in him and his Doctrine; and ſhall be enabled to bear, with Patience and Contentedneſs of Mind, whatſoever ſhall be laid upon you. Fear not therefore in this your Sickneſs, diligently, and *without ceaſing*, to fly to God for Succour and *Eaſe*, nothing doubting but he will favourably hear you, and will grant your Requeſts, ſo far as ſhall be expedient for you. *His Eyes are over the Righteous, and his Ears are open unto their Prayers. He is the God that heareth Prayers; and to him ſhall all Fleſh come. The Lord is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works; nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all ſuch as call upon him faithfully. He will fulfil the Deſire of them that fear him: He alſo will hear their Cry, and will help them.* And *this* therefore, ſays St. *John*, *is the Confidence we have in him, that if we ask any Thing according to his Will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatſoever we ask, we know that we have the Petitions, that we deſir'd of him.*

Phil. 4. 6. 7.

Pſal. 34. 15. Pſ. 65. 2. Pſ. 145. 17, 18, 19. 1 St. Joh. 5. 14, 15.

Euſeb. And to this Remedy the faithful Servants of God have always betaken themſelves in their Afflictions, and have found the good Effect of their Prayers.

The wonderful Effect of Prayer, in Time of Diſtreſs.

Theod. They have ſo, as appears from Multitudes of Inſtances in Scripture. Good King *Hezekiah* being affrighted at the Appearance of *Sennacherib*'s numerous Army, and the Receipt of *Rabſhekah*'s proud and blaſphemouſly domineering Letter, *went up to the Houſe of the Lord, and ſpread the Letter before the Lord, and pray'd unto the Lord,* to vindicate his Cauſe. And the Event of his Addreſs was, that the Prophet *Iſaiah* was ſent, to promiſe him Safety and Deliverance. And accordingly *the Angel of the Lord went forth, and ſmote in the Camp of the* Aſſyrians, *an Hundred and fourſcore and five thouſand; and when they aroſe in the Morning, they were all dead Corpſes.* And at another Time being directed *to ſet his Houſe in order,* to diſpoſe his temporal Concerns, becauſe the Time was come that he muſt *die and not live,* that is to ſay, his Diſeaſe was mortal, and he could not hope to recover by any natural Means, *he* hereupon *turned his Face to the Wall, and pray'd and wept ſore. And the Lord heard his Prayer, and beheld his Tears, and ſent the Prophet* back to him with a Promiſe of Deliverance, and an Aſſurance that *on the Third Day he ſhould go up to the Houſe of the Lord. And the Lord added to his Days fifteen Years.* *Daniel* in like manner, who at other Times made his Supplications no leſs than Three Times a Day, we may be ſure would not neglect to do it, when *in the Lion's Den*; nor *Shadrach, Meſhach,* and *Abednego,* when in *the fiery Furnace.* And lo the aſtoniſhing Return they met with! *God ſent his Angel, and ſhut the Lions Mouths, that they ſhould not hurt* the one; and ſo damp'd the Violence of the Fire, that it had *no Power* over the others; *nor was an Hair of their Head ſinged, neither were their Coats changed, nor the Smell of Fire had paſſed*

If. 37. 14.

Ver. 21, &c.

Ver. 36.

2 Kings 20. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 5, 6.

Dan. 6. 10.

Chap. 3. 22.

Chap. 6. 22.

Chap. 3. 27.

ſed on them. So *Jonah pray'd unto the Lord his God, out of the Fiſh's Belly,* and by this Means obtain'd Deliverance; for *the Lord ſpake unto the Fiſh, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry Land.* And as *David cried unto the Lord* in all his Troubles, and was deliver'd; ſo did his own, and his People's Anceſtors before him from Age to Age, and obtain'd the like Relief, as himſelf teſtifies. *Our Fathers hoped in thee, they truſted in thee, and thou didſt deliver them; they call'd upon thee, and were holpen, they put their Truſt in thee, and were not confounded.* When St. *Paul* and *Silas* were caſt into Priſon, and their Feet made faſt in the Stocks, they failed not to apply themſelves to God for Redreſs, by Night as well as by Day. For behold *at Midnight they pray'd, and ſang Praiſes unto God; and the Priſoners heard them.* And then it follows, *And ſuddenly there was a great Earthquake, ſo that the Foundations of the Priſon were ſhaken; and immediately all the Doors were open'd, and every one's Bands were looſed.* Thus when St. *Peter* was kept in Priſon at *Jeruſalem, Prayer was made unto God without ceaſing for him.* And though one would have thought him, whilſt within thoſe Walls, to have been ſufficiently ſecur'd from making his Eſcape; yet it came to paſs, that whilſt *he was ſleeping betwixt Two Souldiers, bound with Two Chains* within, *and* on the outſide, *the Keepers before the Door kept the Priſon*; yet this hinder'd not, but that *the Angel of the Lord came upon him, and a Light ſhined in the Priſon, and he ſmote Peter on the Side, and rais'd him up, ſaying, ariſe up quickly. And his Chains fell off from his Hands. And when they were paſt the firſt and ſecond Ward, they came to the Iron Gate which leadeth into the City, which open'd to them of its own accord,* and let them

Jonah 2. 1, &c. Ver. 10. Pſal. 22. 4, 5. Acts 16. 23, 24. Ver. 25. Ver. 26. Acts 12. 5. Ver. 6. Ver. 7. Ver. 10.

out. And *Juſtin Martyr* tells us of the Thundering Legion, which conſiſted of Chriſtians, and had this Name given it, becauſe of the great Deliverance wrought at their Supplication in a Time of great Neceſſity.* For when *Marcus Antoninus* and his Army, whereof theſe were a Part, were like to periſh by Hunger and Thirſt, but eſpecially by the latter of them, not having had a ſupply of Water for Five Days together; no ſooner did theſe Chriſtians proſtrate themſelves upon the Ground, calling upon God for Relief in their diſtreſſed Condition, but ἐυθέως ὕδωρ ἠκολούθει ἐφανόθη, immediately the Rain came pouring down from Heaven, cooling and refreſhing their own Army; but a Storm of Lightning and Hail upon their Enemies. St. *Cyprian* profeſſed the Prayers of the Chriſtians to be their † *Spiritual Weapons, and the Divine Darts that protected them.* As *Origen* || alſo declares the Prayers of ſuch as are *repleniſh'd with the holy Spirit* to be heard by God, and that hereupon he *utters his Voice from Heaven*, and ſends ſuch bleſſed *Showers, as refreſh the Soul.* And *Conſtantine* the Great affirms * a *righteous Prayer* to be an *invincible Defence, and that it ſhall not meet with a Diſappointment when offer'd up in Holineſs.* But it is needleſs to inſiſt upon the Authority of others, ſince the Holy Scripture is ſo full to this Purpoſe; and eſpecially conſi-

* Juſtin. Mart. Apol. 2.

† Epiſt. 60.

|| Περὶ εὐχῆς. c. 42.

* Ἀ γενιτον γὰρ χρῆμα ἡ ὀρθὴ προσευχὴ, ἐὰν εἰς ὁσίως πνέυων ἀποτυγχάνει τῦ σκοπῦ. Oratio ad Cœtum Sanctorum. c. 26.

dering

dering the expreſs Promiſe of our bleſſed Saviour. *Ask, and it ſhall be given you: Seek, and ye ſhall find; Knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened.* And again, *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you.* Here is a ſure Foundation to build upon. Others may publiſh their own Experience of the Efficacy of their Prayers; but our Lord here gives us ſuch Aſſurance as leaves no Room to doubt whether our Prayers ſhall be granted, ſuppoſing them ſuch as were fit to be made by us, and that we our ſelves put no Obſtruction in the Way.

St. Mat. 7. 7, 8.

St. Joh. 16. 23.

A Prayer for Direction and Aſſiſtance to pray aright.

I.

SEeing I am weak and helpleſs, and at my beſt Eſtate I have found, O God, by ſad Experience, that without thee I am not able to pleaſe thee, nor know of my ſelf, without the Aſſiſtance of thy holy Spirit, how to pray for any Thing as I ought; I therefore humbly beg thy Guidance and Direction, that all my Petitions may be according to thy Will; that when I confeſs my Sins, it may be with an entire Abhorrence and Deteſtation of them; when I offer up my Praiſes, I may do it from a truly thankful Heart; when I ask any temporal Bleſſings, any Deliverance from Danger or Miſery, any good Thing to be beſtow'd upon me, whether Health of Body, a Competency of outward Enjoyments, an inward Peace and Satisfaction of Mind, or whatſoever is moſt deſireable here, I may be ſure

to do it always with a perfect Submission to thine infinite Wisdom; and when I sue for spiritual Favours, the Forgiveness of Sin, thy holy Spirit to enlighten my Understanding, to raise my Affections to Thee and heavenly Things, to assist my Weaknesses and help my Infirmities, and enable me for the Performance of whatever thou requirest of me, or for eternal Life and Salvation; I may do it in Faith and Humility, and may watchfully avoid whatever tends to the frustrating my Desires. Cleanse and purify my Soul from all those idle and vain Fancies, those inordinate Inclinations to the Things of this World, those carnal Desires and Imaginations, and all those irregular Motions in any Kind, which are too apt to misemploy my Thoughts, and cool my Affections, and even when in thy immediate Presence, and suing for the greatest Blessings I am capable of receiving. And since I cannot serve thee as I would, do thou make me to serve thee in such a Manner as thou wilt condescend to approve of, through Jesus Christ thy Son our Saviour. Amen.

Another

Another for the good Succe of our Prayers.

II.

AND as thou haſt both commanded and encouraged me to addreſs my ſelf to thee, for a Supply of whatever I ſtand in need of, whether in relation to this, or to another Life, hearken to me, O gracious Lord, whenſoever a Senſe of my Duty, and of my Wants, brings me to make my Supplications before thee. Extend thy Pity and Compaſſion to me. And anſwer not my Requeſts according to my own Deſervings, but according to my Needs, and thine abundant Mercies in thy dearly beloved Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

Euſeb. I preſume, *Theodorus*, that you have ſeen a Book written about fourſcore Years ſince, by a very worthy Author, though not commonly taken Notice of now. He was ſometime Follow of *Emanuel* College in *Cambridge*, and afterwards Rector of *Inſtow* in *Devonſhire*. And his Name was Mr. *John Down*.

Theod. He had ſeveral Treatiſes publiſh'd in a pretty thick *Quarto*, but I think not till after his Death. And he was, I find by them, a very conſiderable Man. But how came you to mention him now?

Euſeb. Upon the Account of an admirable Paſſage I have obſerv'd in him to the Point you was diſcourſing upon; which is ſo full to the Purpoſe, that I got it by heart ſome Years ago, and have ſince ſo often thought of it, and been pleas'd with it, that I am apt to think I never ſhall forget it.

Theod.

Theod. It does not occur to me at preſent. Be ſo kind therefore as to help me out.

Euſeb. It is at the Fifty-fifth Page of his Book; and begins thus. *Prayer, as* Damaſcen *expreſſeth it, is ἀνάβασις τῆς νῦ, the Mounting or Flying up of the Soul unto the Throne of Grace. It is the ſweet Incenſe, that ſweet ſmelling Sacrifice, that ſavoureth ſo pleaſingly in the Noſtrils of our God. The Importunity whereof, of* Jacob's *makes us* Iſraels, *Wreſtlers, prevailers with God; that if we will, he cannot go from us, until he hath granted us his Bleſſing. For it hath annex'd unto it the gracious Promiſe of Impetration. —— Neither is there any Thing ſo difficult, or impoſſible with Man, but by Prayer it may be obtain'd. By Prayer,* Abraham *when he was far ſtricken in Years, and the Womb of his Wife* Sarah *was now dead, obtain'd of God a Son, even* Iſaac. *By Prayer,* Jacob *eſcaped the Fury and Danger of his Brother* Eſau. *By Prayer, the Children of* Iſrael *were deliver'd from their cruel Servitude and Bondage in* Egypt. *By Prayer,* Moſes *ſtood in the Gap, and pacified the Wrath of God, that he deſtroy'd not his People. By Prayer, and the lifting up of his Hands, the ſame* Moſes *overthrew the Hoſts of the* Amalekites. *By Prayer,* Joſhua *ſtopped the Courſe of the Sun; and God was obedient to the Voice of a Man. By Prayer,* Sampſon *revenged himſelf upon his Enemies, and ruined the Houſe of* Dagon *upon the* Philiſtines. *By Prayer,* Solomon *obtain'd an incomparable Meaſure of Wiſdom from God. By Prayer,* Hezekiah, *being at the Point of Death, had fifteen Years more added to his Life. By Prayer,* Daniel *ſtopped the Mouths of the Lions. The Three Children quenched the fiery Furnace, that not a Hair of their Head periſh'd.* Jonah *was diſcharg'd of the Whale's Belly. And the Priſon Gates open'd of their own Accord, to enlarge St.* Peter. *It is a Panchreſton, available for*

for all Things. It cureth Diſeaſes, diſpoſſeſſeth Devils, it ſanctifieth the Creatures unto us, unlocketh the Gates of Heaven, and procureth the Coming of the Holy Ghoſt. It is ſeaſonable for all Times, fit for all Places, neceſſary to all Perſons; without it, no Buſineſs whatſoever we undertake can thrive or proſper.

Theod. This is an excellent and true Character of this Duty of Prayer. And now, *Anchithanes*, ſeeing you have ſuch Encouragement to pray to God in this your Sickneſs, be ſure to do it. And do it with a ſound and unſhaken Faith, as being fully perſwaded, that God will both graciouſly hear you, and will work in you what ſhall moſt conduce to his Glory, and the Salvation of your own immortal Soul. For depend upon it, He is the ſame Lord, Yeſterday, to Day, and for ever. *His Hand is not ſhortened, that it ſhall not help; neither his Ear heavy, that it cannot hear.* No; *Salvation* ſtill *belongeth to the Lord*, as much as ever; *and his Bleſſing is upon his People.* Only let me deſire of you never to forget in whoſe Hand you are, ſo as to take upon you to chooſe for your ſelf, and not rather commit your ſelf, and all your Concerns, to the Divine Diſpoſal. And particularly as to your preſent State, be not ſolicitous for Life. But for as much as you know not, what is moſt expedient for you, leave it to Almighty God to determine as ſhall beſt pleaſe him. And be content in all your Prayers intirely to ſubmit your Judgment, and reſign your Choice to the Direction of his infinite Wiſdom; which will be ſure to have a Regard for your trueſt Intereſt incomparably beyond what any mortal Friend can have. Remember the Petition you have juſt now put up to him, for *a perfect Submiſſion to his Will* in whatever

Iſ. 59. 1.

Pſal. 3. 8.

Temporal good Things to be asked with a conſtant Submiſſion to the Divine Will.

whatever concerns this Life, or World. And never fail to prefer his Will before your own, and to acquieſce and ſatisfy your ſelf, in whatſoever it ſhall be his good Pleaſure to ordain for you; after the Example of our bleſſed Lord, who a little before his Paſſion, being nearly affected with the Apprehenſion of his approaching Crucifixion, prayed Three Times over to his heavenly Father, and with great Vehemence and Earneſtneſs, that thoſe bitter Pains and Tortures he was like to ſuffer might be prevented, and he might not be made to undergo them. Nevertheleſs, conſidering that his Father's Will is ever beſt, and moſt eligible, and that the Wills of all Mankind are indiſpenſably oblig'd to yield to it, he wiſh'd rather that the Will of God might be accompliſh'd, than his own, as he was Man; and accordingly ſurrender'd himſelf to ſuffer whatſoever ſhould be appointed him. *O my Father*, ſays our Saviour, *if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me; nevertheleſs not as I will, but as thou wilt. O my Father, if this Cup may not paſs from me, except I drink it, thy Will be done.* And again, the more exemplarily to ſhew his ready Submiſſion to the Divine Will, *he prayed a Third Time, uſing the ſame Words.*

St Mat. 26. 39.

Ver. 42.

Ver. 44.

Euſeb. If we profeſs our ſelves Chriſtians, it will highly become us all, without Doubt or Heſitation, to follow this bleſſed Pattern, which our great Lord and Maſter has ſet us in all our Prayers for temporal good Things of whatſoever Kind. And this Courſe therefore, *Anchithanes*, is neceſſarily concern'd to take in relation to his Sickneſs at this Time. If you pray to God to remove your Diſtemper, and reſtore you to your former Health, that you may yet *live* a while *longer*, may *ſee good Days*

here

here on Earth, and have an Opportunity of ſerving him better than you have done formerly, you muſt not inſiſt upon your own Judgment in this Caſe. You muſt go on to perfect your Preparation for your latter End, and muſt then reſign up your ſelf to God, though Death ſhould appear before you in ever ſo frightful a Dreſs. Though you were to undergo the ſharpeſt Pains and Dolours in order to your Diſſolution, you ought, however, to remember that it belongs not to you to chooſe for your ſelf. And indeed, conſidering how ſhort-ſighted we all are, and how apt to impoſe upon our ſelves, it is well for us, that we have one who is infinitely wiſer to chooſe for us. Wherefore ſet before your ſelf the Example of our bleſſed Lord, when under abundantly greater Agonies than any you have felt; and behave your ſelf with the ſame Humility and Submiſſion that he did. Call to Mind how *he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs.* Phil. 2. 8. And then look forward for your Encouragement, and ſee what Height of Glory follow'd hereupon; how *God alſo highly exalted him, and gave him a Name, which is above every Name,* Ver. 9, 10. *that at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth; and that every Tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.* Remember moreover what St. *Peter* tells us of this his Submiſſion to his Father's Will, that he not only died to make Atonement for our Sins, but to ſet us a Pattern for our Imitation, that he *ſuffer'd for us,* 1 St. Pet. *leaving us an Example, that we ſhould follow his* 2. 21. *Steps.*

A Prayer

A Prayer for Patience and Reſignation to the Divine Will.

I.

O *Lord! Thy Will be done, and not mine. I confeſs, O heavenly Father, that I have juſtly deſerv'd much heavier Puniſhment at thy Hand, than this Sickneſs I here groan under.* If thou ſhouldeſt be extream to mark what were done amiſs, O Lord, who may abide it? *I am very ſure that I, poor, wretched Sinner, cannot. I have ſinned, O Lord; I have ſinned againſt thy holy Laws, and broken thy Commandments Times without Number; and am highly ſenſible that whatſoever I ſuffer, I ſuffer deſervedly, and ſhould have done ſo, had it lien upon me much heavier than it does. Thou, O Lord, art Righteous in all thou haſt brought upon me; but I have done very fooliſhly, and have thereby given thee juſt Occaſion, to have proceeded in a far ſeverer Manner againſt me. I humbly ſubmit to the Stroke of thy Rod, beſeeching thee to give me Grace, now and at all Times, to bear whatever thou layeſt upon me, with both Patience and Thankfulneſs. Suffer me not ſo much as once to murmur, fret, or be diſſatisfied at thy Diſpoſal of me. But grant me, with the utmoſt Submiſſion and Reſignation to thy holy Will, to wait thy good Pleaſure, and be always upon my Watch, till my great Change come, in a full Aſſurance that I ſuffer nothing, but by the Direction of the perfecteſt Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and what, if I be not wanting to my ſelf, ſhall undoubtedly turn to the Glory of thy great Name, and the Safety and Welfare of my own Soul, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

A Prayer

A Prayer for a ſanctified Uſe of Sickneſs.

II.

O *Lord our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlaſting God, who as thou multiplieſt thy Bleſſings and Benefits upon Mankind, doſt likewiſe at other Times ſend Sickneſs and Diſeaſes, either for their Correction and Amendment, or in order to their Tranſlation into another State, look upon me with an Eye of Pity, in this low and weak Condition, whereto I am reduc'd.* Make thou all my Bed in my Sickneſs. *Comfort me, and ſupport me under this thy fatherly Viſitation. Sanctify it to me, that it may be a Means of purifying my Heart, and raiſing it up to the Things above. And make thou me more and more in love with that other better State, wherein I ſhall neither Sin any more, nor be Sick, or Die any more.* I know, O Lord, that of very Faithfulneſs thou haſt cauſed me to be troubled; *and that my Sickneſs ſhall never hurt me, unleſs through my own Fault. Oh! ſuffer me not to be ſo much mine own Enemy, as to turn it againſt my ſelf. But of thy infinite Mercy turn thou it to my Advantage, that as it gives me a Proſpect of my latter End, ſo it may alſo conduce to make me the fitter for it. Uphold my drooping Spirits. Strengthen my weak and languiſhing Soul. Confirm all my good Purpoſes and Reſolutions. And grant that the Reſult of all may be Glory to thee my God, and Happineſs and Salvation to me thine unworthy and ſinful Creature. Deny me not this, I moſt humbly beſeech thee, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour and Redeemer.* Amen.

Euſeb. God has hitherto been merciful to you; and you need not queſtion but he will be ſo to the End.

Anebith. This is my great Support.

Another to the ſame Purpoſe.

III.

LORD, I humbly pray thee, perfect what thou haſt begun in me. O thou God of Peace! ſanctify me wholly; that my whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, may be preſerv'd blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

Euſeb. I hope, by this Time, *Theodorus* has fully ſatisfied you, that you have no Reaſon to conceive that God Almighty has caſt you out of his Favour, though his Hand lies ſomewhat heavy at preſent; or that he will not hear you when you call upon him as you ought.

Anebith. I thank you both for your Kindneſs and Patience towards me. And I muſt own my ſelf convinc'd, that I have all the Reaſon in the World to bear patiently, whatſoever it pleaſes God to lay upon me. You have taught me, that Sufferings are no Sign of God's Hatred; that he has declar'd himſelf ready to take Care of all that faithfully put their Truſt in him; that he has made gracious Promiſes to the *Jews*, and that theſe are not ſo appropriated to that People, but that we Chriſtians have alſo a Right to them, beſides thoſe others which have been ſince made to our ſelves; and that whatſoever Prayers we put up to him aright, will certainly receive a gracious Anſwer, either ſuch as we deſire, or ſuch as

ſhall be better for us. All which Conſiderations you may eaſily ſuppoſe to be no ſmall Conſolation, to one in my weak and uneaſy Condition. But give me Leave to be farther troubleſome to you; for this is not all, nor indeed the main of what I deſir'd, and wherein *Theodorus* kindly undertook to gratify me. For I want farther to be inform'd, how I may know, whether I be ſo far in God's Favour, as that I may reaſonably expect to be tranſlated into a better State, when I ſhall be taken hence.

Theod. This is a Matter of the higheſt Importance that can be, and which ought to be ſeriouſly and throughly conſider'd. And it is what I deſign'd to ſpeak to ſo ſoon as the other ſhould be diſpatch'd; as now it is.

Anchith. Wherefore I hope you will pleaſe now to enter upon it.

Theod. Our chief Deſign in attending you, was to do you the beſt Service we are capable of; and you will be very little oblig'd to us, if we ſhould leave the principal Branch of the Queſtion unconſider'd.

Euſeb. This in ſhort is *Anchithanes*'s ſecond Enquiry; How he may make a right Judgment of himſelf; and the Circumſtances he is in as to his future State; by what Means he may diſtinguiſh, whether he is ſo entitled to the Promiſes of the Goſpel, as that he may depend upon his having a Right to the heavenly Felicity, when he comes into the other World.

Anchith. Really Sirs, I have now very little Concern for this World, wherein it is probable I may not have many Days to ſtay. But I would gladly be taught, how I may diſcern

what is like to become of me, at my Departure hence.

Euſeb. And you are certainly to be greatly commended, for employing your Thoughts about your chief Intereſt, and ſtudying to *make your Calling and Election ſure*; which is the great Buſineſs you came into the World for, and upon the Performance, or Neglect whereof, depends a Happy or Miſerable Eternity.

Theod. Many have undertaken to reſolve this Enquiry. And a great Part of them have done it with very little Succeſs. Wherefore, that I may duly caution againſt ſuch Miſtakes as you might poſſibly be liable to, I muſt take Liberty to obſerve, that *no one ought to conclude himſelf in a State of Grace, for ſome good Motions that may now and then ariſe in his Mind.* * *Ahab* humbled himſelf at the Preaching of the Prophet *Elijah*, and *rent his Clothes, and put on Sackcloth upon his Fleſh, and faſted and lay in Sackcloth, and went ſoftly, Demiſſo Capite*, ſays the vulgar Bible, *hanging down his Head*; יחף, *barefoot*, ſays the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt, *Step by Step, after the Manner of Mourners*, ſays *Vatablus*; hereby teſtifying his inward Grief and Fear for his Injuſtice, though ſuch as produced no Reſtitution, or real Amendment in any Reſpect. *Simon Magus*, in Acknowledgment of his Wickedneſs, deſired St. *Peter* to *pray for him*. *Herod heard John Baptiſt gladly, and did many Things* in Obedience to the Doctrine taught by him. *Felix trembled*, when he *heard St. Paul reaſoning of Temperance, and Righteouſneſs, and Judgment to come.* Yet they are all Reprobates. Nor on the contrary may a Man condemn himſelf, for ſome Coldneſs and Dampneſs of Spirit that he finds in himſelf, ſo long as his Heart is truly

None to judge himſelf in a ſafe Condition, becauſe of ſome good Motions in his Heart.

* 1 Kings 21. 27.

Acts 8. 24.

St. Mark 6. 20.

Acts 24. 25.

ly ſet to ſerve the Lord, and he does it to the beſt of his Power at that Time, though not ſuitably to his Deſires. As our Bodies are often out of order, and ſo leſs fit for their uſual Operations; ſo are our Souls too. Inſomuch that the beſt Chriſtians do not find themſelves always alike diſpos'd for God's Service, nor able to worſhip him with the ſame ſenſible Fervor and Affection. Yet ought not ſuch to be diſcourag'd, or to diſtruſt their own Condition, becauſe their Minds thro' the Infirmity of the Body are not always in the ſame happy Temper. They ſhould rather argue with themſelves, that this not being in their Power to remedy, their Buſineſs is to bear it with a Chriſtian Patience, and though to be ſincerely humbled for it, yet by no Means to miſtruſt the Mercy of God, or deſpair of the Acceptance of their Devotions, much leſs of their Salvation by reaſon of it; it is the *Heart* as I ſhall obſerve more fully anon, that God looks for, and *out of which*, as the wiſe Man ſpeaks, *are the Iſſues of Life*; and ſo long as this is right, they need not diſtruſt God's Favour, by reaſon of ſuch Weakneſſes and Imperfections, as are naturally incident to this frail, mortal State, and ſo are unavoidable by us, whilſt we remain in it. Prov. 4. 23.

Neither ought any one to think the better of himſelf, becauſe his Conſcience ſometimes recoils, and is uneaſy, and checks and rebukes him for what he does amiſs, and he cannot commit his Sins with the ſame Eaſe and Unconcernedneſs, that thoſe about him do. This ſhews him not to have ſinned himſelf beyond all Senſe of Duty, and that he is not yet *paſt feeling*, but not that he is freed from the Dominion of his Sins. *Know ye not*, ſays St. *Paul*, *that to whom ye yield your ſelves* Nor becauſe of ſome Checks of Conſcience. Ephes. 4. 19. Rom. 6. 16.

ſelves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteouſneſs? The Queſtion therefore is not, whether Sin be obey'd willingly, or unwillingly; but whether it be obey'd at all. For if it be, the Man is yet the Servant of Sin; in like manner as among Men, a Servant is a Servant, whilſt he continues to ſerve his Maſter, though poſſibly he may do it but with an unwilling Mind. His Checks of Conſcience may prove of very good Uſe to him, if ſeriouſly attended to, becauſe they naturally direct to an Amendment of what he thus reproves himſelf for. And happy he, if he make a right Improvement of them, by a ſubſequent Care never to incur the like Guilt again, whatſoever Temptations he may meet with to it. But unleſs they produce this good Effect in him, they will but encreaſe his Guilt, and add to his Condemnation, and inſtead of entitling him to Heaven, will ſet him at the greater Diſtance from it. *Beloved*, ſays St. *John*, *If our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all Things.* As much as to ſay, if our Heart condemn us, God who obſerves all the Motions of our Hearts, and knows all the Wickedneſs that is entertain'd there, will be ſure to condemn us too. And it will be impoſſible to interpret this Doctrine to the Comfort and Satisfaction of him who Sins againſt his Conſcience, and ſo ſtands ſelf-condemned. His ſinning, when thus warned againſt it, argues him to have a Senſe of his Duty, and the Unreaſonableneſs and Danger of tranſgreſſing it, and that hence he cannot ſin upon ſo cheap and eaſy Terms as others may. *Let no Man therefore flatter himſelf*, ſays

1 St. John 3. 21.

Biſhop

Biſhop *Taylor* very juſtly, * *that he is a regenerate Perſon, becauſe though he is a Servant to Sin, and acts at the Command of his Luſts, and cannot reſiſt in the evil Day, and ſtand the Shock of a Temptation, yet he finds an Unwillingneſs within him, and a Strife againſt Sin.* —— *Every ſuch Perſon is a Servant of Sin, and therefore not a Servant of the Spirit, but free from, that is, not ruled by the Law of Righteouſneſs.* And again, *If an* unregenerate Perſon *did always ſin willingly, that is, without Reluctancy and Strife within; and the* Regenerate *did ſin as infallibly, but yet ſore againſt his Will; then the* regenerate Perſon *were the verier Slave of the Two; for he that obeys willingly, is leſs a Slave, than he that obeys in Spight of his Heart.* A wicked Man may not be ſo hardened in his Wickedneſs, nor his Conſcience ſo ſear'd, but that he may ſometimes find ſtrong Reluctancies in himſelf, before he can bring himſelf to comply with a Temptation. But if he do however work himſelf up to ſuch a Compliance, this ſhews the greater Malignity of his Heart, and that he is *yet in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and the Bond of Iniquity.* Some Sins too are of ſo heinous a Nature, and offer ſuch Violence to a Soul not fully ſettled upon its Lees, that a Man may be wicked to a great Degree, and yet not be able to venture upon theſe without a Struggle and Conflict within himſelf, before he can reſolve to commit them. In which Caſes, the Sinner not only remains a Sinner ſtill, notwithſtanding theſe Reproofs from his Conſcience; but he is ſo much the greater Sinner, for having broke through all thoſe Impediments to get at

* Unum Neceſſar. Chap. 7. Sect. 5. N. 35.

Nor for ſome Advances towards a Reformation.

his Sin. *A Man may not only be taught his Duty, but convinc'd moreover of the Neceſſity of Performing it, and that he is a pernicious Enemy to his own Soul, if he do it not; may approve of what is excellent, and commend and admire it in others, as it is well known that many applaud Virtue in their Thoughts, and Words, that yet ſhew but little Regard for it in their Actions; may forſake divers of his leſs tempting Sins, and ſometimes ſuch as are not to be caſt off, without ſome Violence offer'd to himſelf, and his corrupt Inclinations; may be obſervant of the ordinary Offices of Religion; may beſtow ſome Charities, and ſometimes ſeek to make up Differences amongſt his Neighbours; may faſt and pay Tithes, as the proud* Phariſee *did, and do many other good Deeds; and yet come ſhort of Heaven.* His Obedience muſt be ſerious, and uniform, and conſtant, whatſoever Temptations he meets with to the contrary, if he would not be found of the Number of thoſe, who *ſhall ſeek to enter in at the ſtreight Gate, and ſhall not be able.* He muſt renounce all his moſt beloved Luſts; muſt *abſtain from all Appearance of Evil*; and muſt **perfect Holineſs in the Fear of God*, by †*keeping the Commandments* before he can hope to *enter into Life.* ‖ *Neither may we preſume our ſelves ſafe, becauſe of our Love to the inſtrumental Duties of Religion,* ſuch as hearing and reading God's Word, attending upon the Preaching of it, receiving the bleſſed Sacrament, *&c.* ſo long as we *have* not *a* like *Regard to all God's Commandments.* One ſpends a great Part of his Time in hearing Sermons, running from one Church to another, as if the whole of Chriſtianity conſiſted in enquiring after God's Will, rather than in a diligent and conſcientious Performance of it; and ſo being *a Hearer of the Word, but not a Doer of it, deceives his*

St. Luke 18. 12.

Chap. 13. 24.

1 Theſ. 5. 22.

* 2 Cor. 7. 1.

† St. Mat. 19. 17.

‖ *Nor for his Love to the inſtrumental Duties of Religion.*

Pſal 119. 6.

St. James 1. 22.

own

own ſelf. Another is very obſervant of his Times of Devotion, both in Publick and Private, and is careful to admoniſh his Neighbours, and invite, and encourage them to a like Deportment. And ſo far is well. But yet how good an Opinion ſoever he has of himſelf upon this Account, he ought to know, that it is not enough that theſe Duties be perform'd; but an Eye muſt alſo be had to the End of them, which is the making us *Holy in all Manner of Converſation*, and till they produce this good Effect in us, the true Intent and Deſign of them is not anſwer'd. Again, another is very deſirous to partake of the holy Euchariſt upon all Opportunities, and accordingly is ſure to be there whenever it is adminiſtred, and carries himſelf very devoutly at it. He takes Care too to prepare himſelf for ſome Time beforehand, for this holy Ordinance, by a diligent Examination into his own Heart and Ways, a Renunciation of all his Sins, and a Reſolution and Promiſe of better Obedience for the Future; and hence he concludes himſelf a good Chriſtian, and a happy Man. Yet let ſuch an one remember, that except he reduce his good Purpoſes to Practice, unleſs his Life be all of a Piece, and he approve himſelf a Saint out of the Church or Cloſet, as well as in it, he is yet but an ill Proficient in the School of Chriſt. Theſe forementiond, and the other like Duties, are indeed of great Weight in our Religion, and neceſſary Parts of it; and are of ſuch excellent Uſe in order to our Growth in Grace, that he who performs them as he ought, may juſtly be ſaid to be *not far from the Kingdom of Heaven*, and its eternal Felicity. And yet, as near as he is, if he depend upon theſe Duties, and have nothing elſe

1 St. Pet. 1. 15.

to make out his Title to that bleſſed Place, he will never come thither. But whatſoever Notion either himſelf, or others, may have had of him, becauſe of ſuch his Deportment, here in this World, he will find himſelf in a deplorable Condition when he comes into the other. *The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord.* And *he that turneth away his Ear from hearing the Law*, that is, from attending to, and obeying it, *even his Prayer ſhall be an Abomination.* Almighty God by the Prophet *Iſaiah* moſt expreſly declares againſt this Sort of Religion, as no Way acceptable to him, and directs to that which is more real and ſubſtantial. As whoſoever pleaſes may ſee in the Firſt Chapter of *Iſaiah*, the Thirteenth and Seven following Verſes. And in the New Teſtament, ſays our Saviour, *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the Things that I ſay?* And again, *Not every one that ſaith unto me Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.* It is not profeſſing his Name, and worſhipping and praying to him that will capacitate us for Salvation, nor any Thing leſs than a ſincere and univerſal Obſervance of the Precepts he has given us in Charge. *Much leſs may any one expect to be ſav'd for his Adherence to a Sect or Party, and his Zeal for promoting its Intereſt*, and eſpecially by unjuſtifiable and wicked Means. *It is* certainly *good to be zealouſly affected always*; but then we muſt be ſure it be *in a good Thing*, and *according to Knowledge*; for otherwiſe the Conſequents of it may be very terrible. It was St. *Paul's* Zeal that put him upon perſecuting the Church of *Chriſt*. Yet he was ſo far from valuing himſelf for it, that he calls himſelf *the Chief of Sinners*, and profeſſes of himſelf,

Prov. 15. 8.

Chap. 28. 9.

St. Luke 6. 46.

St. Mat. 7. 21.

Nor from his Zeal for a Sect or Party.

Gal. 4. 18.

Rom. 10. 2.

Phil. 3. 6.

1 Tim. 1. 15.

ſelf, that he was *not worthy to be call'd an Apoſtle*, and for this very Reaſon, *becauſe he had perſecuted the Church of God.* Men may poſſibly pleaſe themſelves with ſuch a Zeal, and may think themſelves no mean Chriſtians for it; but it is a very indifferent Sign that *Chriſt Jeſus* is truly *formed in them.* Schiſms and Diviſions are ſo highly diſpleaſing to Almighty God, that throughout St. *Paul's* Epiſtles, perhaps you will not find any one Sin, againſt which he ſo frequently cautions his Readers, as againſt this. And in the ancient Church it was eſteemed of that heinous Nature, * that Martyrdom it ſelf was not thought a ſufficient Expiation of it. And ſuch muſt therefore be moſt deſtructive Caſuiſts, who can look upon embarking in ſo dangerous an Evil, as a Token of a holy and good Mind. It is what ſincere and well-meaning Perſons may ſometimes fall into; but it is certainly no Part of their Goodneſs, but a great Blemiſh to it, and a leſſening all their brighteſt Virtues. So far is it from being any Sort of Evidence for their Juſtification and Salvation.

1 Cor. 15. 9. *Rom.* 15. 5, 6. *& Chap.* 16. 17, 18. 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. *& Chap.* 3. 3. *& Chap.* 11, 18. *Gal.* 5. 20. *Eph.* 4. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Phil.* 2. 1. *& Chap.* 3. 16.

Euſeb. Has this Zeal for a Party ever been laid down as a Teſt of our Diſpoſition in order to a future State?

Theod. Never that I know of it in ſo many Words. But the great Regard that is ordinarily ſhewn to it by thoſe of the ſame Party, and the Encouragement they uſually give to one another, as if all that ſuffer'd in ſuch a Caſe were Martyrs for Chriſt, ſeems ſo natu-

* B. Cypr. Epiſt. 55, & 60. Optat. Milev. c. Parmen. l. 1. B. Chryſoſt. in Epheſ. Hom. 11.

rally

rally to imply it, that this gave me Occaſion to caution againſt ſuch a Self-deceit.

Euſeb. But ſeeing there are ſo many Sects and Hereſies, Diviſions and Subdiviſions, do not you think that every one is nearly concern'd to adhere faithfully to what he is fully ſatisfied is right, and to promote it to his Power, whether by doing or ſuffering? And if he die for it, may he not look upon this as laying down his Life for Chriſt; and conſequently may he not reckon himſelf one of thoſe to whom our Saviour has promis'd, that by laying down their *Lives for his Sake*, they *ſhall ſave them* to all Eternity?

St. Mar. 8. 35. & St. Luke 9. 24.

Theod. No doubt every one is nearly concern'd, to *contend earneſtly for the Faith that was once deliver'd to the Saints*, and to be ready to ſuffer and die for it. This is ſo neceſſary, that our Saviour aſſures us over and over, that ſuch as decline ſuffering here for his Sake, ſhall ſuffer for ever hereafter for their own Folly. For this is the plain Import of thoſe Words of his, *Whoſoever will ſave his Life, ſhall loſe it; He that taketh not his Croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me; Whoſoever ſhall be aſham'd of me, and of my Words, of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſham'd, when he ſhall come in his own Glory, and in his Fathers, and of the holy Angels*, with other like Expreſſions. Wherefore I muſt beg Leave to obſerve to you, that what I have ſaid as to this Point, was intended only for theſe Purpoſes. Firſt, to remind Perſons that they are to be very well aſſur'd they are in the Right, before they take upon them to appear zealous for their own Notions and Practices, and thoſe of their Party, how numerous ſoever, and whatſoever ſpecious Shew of an unfeigned Piety they may make. This they are obliged

St. Jud. 3. St. Mat. 16. 25. Chap. 10. 38. St. Luke 9. 26.

to

to take an eſpecial Care of, and to uſe their utmoſt Diligence and Impartiality in order to a right Information of themſelves, leſt otherwiſe they really Sin againſt God, whilſt they think themſelves *doing him Service*, and incur that dreadful Wo which our bleſſed Saviour denounc'd againſt the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, for their unwearied Diligence in proſelyting others to their Sect, and preſſing their wonted Strictneſſes upon them. *Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſes, Hypocrites, for ye compaſs Sea and Land to make one Proſelyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the Child of Hell than your ſelves.* Next, to caution that they be not contentious and quarrelſome when in the Right, but temper their Zeal with Prudence and Gentleneſs, and a Tenderneſs of Heart towards ſuch as differ from them; that their Zeal in ever ſo juſt a Cauſe do not tranſport them beyond the Bounds of their Duty, and put them upon any indirect and unlawful Means for the Maintenance of what they have undertaken, ſtudying by all fair Ways, but none other than ſuch, to juſtify themſelves and their Profeſſion; as becomes the Followers of the meek and holy *Jeſus*. But that which I chiefly intended is, in the laſt Place, that none ever expect their Zeal for the beſt of Cauſes, the weightieſt of Truths, or the moſt truly Chriſtian Doctrines, ſhould ever make Atonement for their Vices and Immoralities. Right Principles will by no Means ſuit wrong Practices. And let a Man be ever ſo Orthodox in his Belief, or regular in his Worſhip, or conſtant to ſome diſcountenanced Chriſtian Duty, all the Concern he can ſhew in behalf of ſuch decried Part of his Religion, will never recommend him to Almighty God, if

St. John 16. 2.

St. Mat. 23. 15.

if in other Reſpects he allows himſelf to tranſgreſs his Laws. And I have therefore often wonder'd, to ſee ſuch as could ſuffer to a great Degree for the Sake of a good Conſcience, to be yet ſo unconſcientious as to indulge themſelves in cuſtomary Swearing or Intemperance, Cheating, or other like immoral and ſhameful Courſes. If ſuch do not think to make Amends for their Looſeneſs in one Reſpect, by their Exactneſs in the other, I cannot tell why they ſhould chooſe to ſuffer as they have done: And yet, if they do think it, they groſly deceive themſelves, as they will be ſure at length to find to their Coſt. But I have already inſiſted too long upon this fifth Particular; wherefore I leave it, and proceed. *We are by no Means to judge our ſelves in God's Favour, and Heirs of the Glory he has promis'd to his faithful Servants, from our Regard to Men of exemplary Piety, and the great Veneration we have for them.* This, I remember, has ſometimes been laid down as a Rule, whereby for Chriſtians to take a View of the State of their Souls. But with how little Reaſon will evidently appear, if you but call to Mind, that the moſt profligate Wretches cannot but ever and anon betray the Reverence they inwardly bear, to ſuch as at other Times, they would be thought to have the greateſt Averſion to, and whom they would repreſent as Fools and Madmen, for *not running into the ſame Exceſs of Riot with themſelves.* Virtue commands a Reſpect, even from the incorrigibly Wicked, which with all their Arts they cannot ſo totally ſuppreſs, as that it ſhall not frequently diſcover it ſelf. And though others, who are not ſo intirely devoted to their Luſts, may have a greater Veneration than theſe, for ſuch as they ſee truly

Nor from our Veneration for good Men.

truly Holy and Religious; the moſt that can be collected from hence is, that they are not ſo wholly abandoned to their Vices as theſe; not that they have made ſuch Proficiency in Chriſtianity, as to capacitate them for the heavenly Felicity. *Nor farther may a Man reckon himſelf ſafe, purely from his Reliance upon Chriſt for Salvation.* A Doctrine the holy Scriptures never taught, though ſome Men have! It is true, It is Chriſt alone that has purchaſed this Salvation for us; and who freely offers it to ſuch as will be prevail'd with to capacitate themſelves for it. He calls and invites, and preſſes and beſeeches Sinners to be reconcil'd to God. But then it is to be conſider'd, that this *being reconcil'd to God* implies more in it, than a bare Reliance upon Chriſt. It implies in it no leſs than a hearty and ſincere Repentance, and Amendment of Life; which is often * enjoined in Scripture, and † without which there is no Poſſibility of being ſaved. And accordingly our Lord himſelf declares, that whoſoever || will *enter into Life, muſt keep the Commandments.* This is a neceſſary Condition of the Goſpel-Covenant, which whoſoever does not faithfully ſet himſelf to perform, can have no Hope of Salvation. And though it be ſaid, that * *by the Works of the Law no Fleſh ſhall be juſtified,* but only by *the*

Nor from his Reliance upon Chriſt for Salvation.

* St. Mat. 3. 28. & 4. 17. & 9. 13. St. Mark 1. 15. & 6. 12. Act. 2. 38. & 17. 30. & 20. 21. & 26. 20. Rev. 2. 5, 16, 21. & 3. 19.

† St. Mark 1. 4. St. Luke 13. 3, 5. & 24. 47. Acts 3. 19. & 5. 31. & 11. 18. 2 Cor. 7. 10. 2 St. Pet. 3. 9.

|| St. Mat. 19 17.

* Gal. 2. 16.

Faith

Faith of Jeſus Chriſt, this is very far from implying that our Juſtification, and conſequently our Salvation, does not depend upon the Works of the Goſpel, when our Saviour and his Apoſtles ſo conſtantly teach it does. Not that any Services we are capable of paying, can any Way merit our Salvation, this being the Purchaſe of Chriſt's Blood, and which is to be obtain'd only through his Mediation; but only they are the indiſpenſable Condition of obtaining it, our bleſſed Lord having undoubtedly aſſured us, that he will beſtow it upon no other Terms, but of *Repentance* unto Life, as well as *Faith* in, and dependance upon him for it. And agreeably hereto is the Apoſtle St. *Paul* to be underſtood, when he profeſſes his Deſire, *to be found in Chriſt, not having his own Righteouſneſs, which is of the Law; but that which is through the Faith of Chriſt; the Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith.* Where it is plain the Apoſtle does not diſtinguiſh between Faith in Chriſt, and Obedience to the Precepts of his Goſpel, of which Faith in Chriſt is one; but purely between a legal and evangelical Obedience. And the Righteouſneſs he diſclaims is not his Obſervance of the Laws of the Goſpel, but as himſelf tells us, ſuch as is *of the Law*, that *Jewiſh* Law wherein he had been educated, and *had lived* a ſtrict Obſerver of its Rites and Ceremonies, *a Phariſee*. All theſe, ſays he, I now deſpiſe, in Compariſon of the ineſtimable Advantages that are to be expected, by the purer and more divine and heavenly Religion of the Goſpel; that Religion which conſiſts in a Belief of the Chriſtian Doctrine, and Obedience to its Commands. A Doctrine that has taught our Duty more plainly than the

Acts 20. 21.

Phil. 3. 9.

Acts 26. 5.

Law did, has given far greater Encouragement to, and has promis'd greater Aſſiſtance in the Performance of it, and has ſhewn us how our Failings and Defects may be pardon'd through Chriſt, if we but take Care to ſerve him ſincerely according to our Power. And in this Senſe is that other Text refer'd to likewiſe by the *Aſſembly of Divines* in their *larger Catechiſm* to be taken; *To him give all the Prophets Witneſs, that through his Name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins.* Acts 10. 43. And that other Saying of St. *Paul* and *Silas* to the convert Jailor; *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſav'd.* Chap. 16. 31. In neither of which Places is Faith to be taken as an Act of relying upon Chriſt, which the Apoſtle St. *James* aſſures us *is dead* when *alone*, and not accompanied with good Works; but an embracing the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and a Submiſſion to all its Precepts and Injunctions, as without which there is no pleaſing God, or hope of being accepted with him. In a word, a Reſolution of all our Grounds of Salvation into a meer Dependance upon Chriſt, is no leſs than a total Subverſion of his Goſpel; which does moſt certainly require this Dependance upon him for the Forgiveneſs of our Sins, and the Acceptance of our defective imperfect Services, when we have us'd our own unfeigned Endeavours to qualify our ſelves for his Mercy; but from one End of it to the other inculcates the miſerable Condition of ſuch as indulge themſelves in any Sort of Sin, and ſo are not *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* Of ſuch it aſſures us, beyond all Contradiction, that they *ſhall be puniſh'd with everlaſting Deſtruction, from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power; when he* St. James 2. 17. Hebr. 12. 14. 2 Theſ. 1. 9, 10.

ſhall

ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. So that nothing can be more vain and unreaſonable, than an Expectation of Happineſs by Means of ſuch a Faith, as is of no avail, when ſeparated from that Obedience, which the Goſpel all along ſo neceſſarily requires, in order to Salvation.

St. Mat. 25. 31, &c. I am ſure in our bleſſed Saviour's Account of the laſt Judgment, he teaches, that all ſhall have their final Sentence paſſed upon them according to their having done, or not done, what was requir'd of them. And the Apoſtle

2 Cor. 5. 10. St. *Paul* affirms as expreſly as may be, that *we muſt all appear before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive* his Reward, not according to his Faith ſtrictly taken, but according to his Obedience in general. For ſo it follows, *according to that he hath done in the Body, whether it be good or bad.* It is not therefore Faith alone that will obtain our Salvation; but Faith together with its Effects, a Faith that is productive of good Works, that is to ſay, ſuch a Belief in Chriſt, as teaches us not only to rely upon his Merits, but to ſerve him faithfully all the Days of our Life.

Nor becauſe once in a State of Grace. *It is a very falſe Judgment he makes, who concludes himſelf at preſent to be in a State of Grace, and the right Way to Salvation, only becauſe he is ſenſible he once was ſo.* This has been poſitively laid down as an infallible Teſt, and much inſiſted upon by divers Authors of no ſmall Character in their Time. But without any juſt Reaſon; for there is nothing more certain, than that

Ezek. 18. 26. *a Righteous Man may turn away from his Righteouſneſs, and commit Iniquity, and die in it.* And

Rom. 11. 29. though *the Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance,* and he will never reject ſuch as ſhew themſelves worthy Partakers of his Fa-

vour, whilſt they retain their Integrity; yet on the other Hand, *from him that hath not*, that is, that makes not a good Improvement of what Grace he is intruſted with, *ſhall be taken away even that he hath.* And though *whom God once loves, he loves to the End*, if they continue proper Objects of his Love; yet this will never prove, that he will ſtill go on to love them, how heinouſly ſoever they ſin againſt him. For which Reaſon our Saviour cautions his Diſciples, ſo to demean themſelves, as that he may have no Occaſion to withdraw his Affection from them. *As the Father hath loved me*, ſaith our Saviour, *ſo have I loved you; continue ye in my love.* As if our Saviour ſhould have ſaid, Take Care to do thoſe Things, which you know pleaſing to me, that ſo I may yet continue to love you. And how this is to be done, the following Words declare; *If ye keep my Commandments, ye ſhall abide in my Love; even as I have kept my Father's Commandments, and abide in his Love.* This is the only Way to have his Love continu'd to us to the laſt. And whoſoever acts otherwiſe, has all the Reaſon in the World to ſatisfy himſelf, that he is working out his own Deſtruction; and that therefore his having been formerly in God's Love, will ſtand him in no farther Stead, when he has again ſhewn himſelf unworthy of it. The Scripture teaches very plainly, that Men may *run well* at the firſt, and yet afterwards be *hindered, that they ſhould not obey the Truth*; that ſome after they have been once in the right Way, may nevertheleſs *draw back unto Perdition*, as well as others *go on to the ſaving of their Souls.* Men may have proceeded ſo far, as not only to have been *enlightened*, or baptized into the Chriſtian Church, but to

St. Mat. 13. 12.

St. John 13. 1.

St. John 15. 9.

Ver. 10.

Gal. 5. 7.

Hebr. 10. 39.

Hebr. 6. 4, 5, 6. *have tasted of the heavenly Gift*, enjoying the Privileges of Christians, Pardon of Sin, and Peace of Conscience, *and been made Partakers of* the extraordinary Gifts of *the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come*, as the Age of the Gospel is call'd, having had Experience of the Promises of Christ, and the wonderful Works of Mercy wrought for Mankind by him, and yet may *fall away* so desperately, that it shall be *impossible to renew them again to Repentance*. Let no one therefore deceive himself with this, that he was once a Child of God, and Heir of Glory, and for this Reason must be always so. For unless he retain his Sense of Duty to the last, he will find himself upon the left Hand, when he comes at the Great Day to appear before his Judge. It is *he* only *who endures to the End*, that *shall be saved*. And all else will have their Hopes dreadfully disappointed, when they come to hear their final Sentence pass'd upon them. They may have deluded themselves in their Life-time, with the Thoughts of their having been once in the Way of Righteousness, but will be convinc'd to their eternal Sorrow that they have not been so wise as they thought themselves. For supposing they are not mistaken concerning their former State, and that they were once in as good a Condition as they imagine, their Apostatizing afterwards is at least as certain a Sign they are now out of the Way of Salvation, as their utmost Attainments in Religion ever could be, that they were at any Time in it. *Nor again may a Man conclude himself safe, because he is sorry for his Sins, after he has committed them.* This I own is highly commendable in him, and the best Thing he can do next to forsaking

St. Mat. 10. 22.

Nor because he is sorry for his Sins.

forſaking them; and gives good Hopes of his Amendment; yet it is really no more than the moſt profligate Wretches can ſometimes ſay of themſelves. Thoſe *Ictus & Laniatus*, thoſe intolerable Stings of Conſcience which frequently purſue them, in Spight of all the Care they can take to ſtifle and ſuppreſs them, are an undeniable Proof, that a Man may be greatly troubled for his Sins, without being a true Penitent. *Judas* we all know was ſo; and no one queſtions to what *Place he went*, when he left this World. Wherefore in the laſt Place, *The only true and certain Teſt whereby to make a right Judgment of our ſelves, is that which our bleſſed Saviour directs for the Diſcovery of falſe Prophets*; but which is alike uſeful for ſhewing all others to themſelves, ſo as that by the help hereof they may diſcern how the Caſe ſtands with them, as to the Safety, or Loſs of their Souls; namely, *by the Fruits they produce.* By the Uprightneſs or Obliquity of his Converſation, each one may make a ſafe Trial of himſelf; and no other Way that I know of. *By their Fruits ye ſhall know them*, ſays our Saviour: *Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thiſtles? Even ſo every good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit; but a corrupt Tree bringeth forth evil Fruit. Every Tree that bringeth not forth good Fruit, is cut down, and caſt into the Fire. Wherefore by their Fruits ye ſhall know them.* A good or bad Tree is not more naturally diſtinguiſhable by the Quality of the Fruit it yeilds, than a good or a bad Man, a Saint or a Reprobate, by the conſtant Tenor of his Converſation. And to ſeek after any other Sort of Teſt, for the Trial of our preſent, or Diſcovery of our future State, is but to put a Fallacy upon our ſelves, and per-

Nor any other Way than by a hearty Obedience to the Divine Will.

St. Mat. 7. 16, &c.

haps by that Means to expoſe our ſelves to eternal Deſtruction. It is he, and he only,

Acts 10. 35. *who feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs, that is accepted with him.* Hence,

2 Cor. 1. 12. ſays St. *Paul*, *Our rejoicing*, the Ground of our Comfort, and Boaſting * *ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν, is this, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Converſation in the World*; "not "as worldly Wiſdom would direct, ſays "† Dr. *Hammond*, but according to the Goſ-"pel-Rules, we have behav'd our ſelves to-"wards all Men; and this I can ſay with "Joy and Comfort. And ſo ſays St. *John*, when laying down the Marks whereby to diſ-

1 St. John 3. 7, &c. cern a Child of God from a Child of the Devil; *Little Children, let no Man deceive you; he that doth Righteouſneſs is Righteous, even as he is Righteous. He that committeth Sin is of the Devil; for the Devil ſinneth from the Beginning. For this Purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil. Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit Sin; for his Seed remaineth in him; and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God. In this the Children of God are manifeſt, and the Children of the Devil: Whoſoever doth not Righteouſneſs is not of God*; whereby alſo is implied on the contrary, that whoſoever doth Righteouſneſs is of God. Whence it follows that a true Member of Chriſt, and Heir of the Kingdom of Heaven, muſt be one who has ſo far got the Maſtery over all his corrupt Inclinations and Paſſions, that he is fully ſet upon doing God's Will, to the utmoſt

* Ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν.

† In loc.

of his Power; not daring to allow himſelf in any known Violation of his Lord's Commands, though when under the greateſt Preſſure and Temptation. With *Job*, he reſolves to *hold faſt his Integrity, and not let it go*; and that his *Heart ſhall not reprove him ſo long as he lives.* With *David*, he *ſets God always before him*, that in nothing he may dare to provoke his Divine Majeſty; who, he conſiders is always preſent with him. And with St. *Paul*, he *exerciſes himſelf always to have a Conſcience void of Offence, towards God, and towards Man.* He bethinks himſelf, that the Promiſes of God are made to the Faithful and Obedient, and till he ſhall acquit himſelf as ſuch, he can have no Pretence of Claim to them. And this convinces him of the Neceſſity of keeping a diligent Watch over himſelf, that he not only never indulges himſelf in any known Sin, but that he be not, for Want of due Care, betray'd into it, through Ignorance, Infirmity, or Inadvertency. And if he be ſo unhappy as to fall, before he is aware of it, into any Kind of Sin, he immediately repents of it, laments and bewails it, ſues moſt earneſtly to God for Forgiveneſs, and keeps a peculiar Watch over himſelf in that Particular, that he may incur the like Guilt no more. This he knows is the only Way to *make his Calling and Election ſure*; and accordingly he reſolutely applies himſelf to it, and will upon no Terms be diverted from it. In a Word, he ſeriouſly lays to Heart, and takes Care to follow the Advice given by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: Let the Wicked forſake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts: And let him return unto the Lord,*

Job 27. 6.

Pſal. 16. 8.

Acts 24. 16.

Iſa. 55. 6, 7.

Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly Pardon.

How to know when we may be truly said to have obey'd the Divine Will.

Euseb. This we all know, that to turn from our Iniquities, and walk holily before God, in the more difficult as well as the easier Duties of Religion, is the sure Way to please him, and secure an Interest in his Favour. But how shall a Man know certainly when he has done this? Could he indeed perform his Duty without any Failure in it, it were easy for him to pronounce of himself, that he was in the right Way to everlasting Peace and Glory. As also on the other Hand, it is easy for a wicked Man to know into what a miserable Condition he has brought himself, and that 'till he alters his Course, and enters upon a new and more holy Conversation, he can look upon himself as no better than a lost undone Wretch, a Vessel of Wrath fitted for Destruction. But now betwixt those Two different States, it is in some Cases, and at some Times, a difficult Matter to determine, on which Side of it the Man is, that is to say, whether he has arriv'd to such a Degree of Goodness, as that he is in Safety, or his Guilt still adheres to him, and so he is every Moment in Danger of dropping into Hell. And how shall he do to make a right Judgment of himself in so nice a Case?

Anchith. You say very right, *Eusebius.* This is so common a Case, and yet withal so difficult to be clearly stated, that I must again entreat *Theodorus*'s Determination of it.

Theod. This I confess is the main Difficulty. And that I may set it in the best Light I can, I shall deliver what I have to say to it by Way, first of Advice, and then of direct Answer to your Enquiry.

Euseb.

Euſeb. Pray what is it you would *Adviſe*?

Theod. That is very obvious; and I wiſh all Perſons were as ready to follow it, as they are capable of ſeeing the Reaſonableneſs and admirable Uſefulneſs of it. It is no other than this, that every one would ſet himſelf in good Earneſt not to relapſe into Sin; or if he can, to be ſtill making greater Improvements in Religion, to *grow in Grace*, purging himſelf, as far as he ſhall be able, from all the Remainders of his Sins, and ſtudying to encreaſe daily in Virtue and Goodneſs. By this Means his Evidences for Heaven will become ſo inconteſtable, that he needs have no Doubt about them. Which would be the beſt and moſt effectual Reſolution of this Enquiry that it is capable of.

The beſt Way to know this, is by ſuch an Attainment in Goodneſs, as may leave no Cauſe to doubt of it.

Euſeb. I thank you, *Theodorus*, for your neceſſary, and moſt uſeful Advice. And if you be but as happy in your Anſwer, we ſhall be highly indebted to you.

Theod. What I have to anſwer in the firſt Place is, I. That ſo long as a Man allows himſelf in any one known Sin, of whatever Nature it be, he may depend upon it, that he is but in a bad Condition, and has all the Reaſon in the World to ſet upon a ſpeedy Reformation; leaſt otherwiſe he be ſnatch'd away in his Sin, and ſo be for ever miſerable. For there is nothing more certain, than that whilſt he allows himſelf in the wilful Tranſgreſſion of any Part of his Duty, no Sorrow for it, or Supplications for Pardon, will reſtore him to God's Favour. As St. *Paul* teaches, that, *If a Man beſtow all his Goods to feed the Poor, and though he give his Body to be burned, and hath not Charity, it profiteth him nothing*; ſo may

So long as a Man allows himſelf in any known Sin, his Caſe is very bad.

1 Cor. 13. 3.

I ſay here, Though a Man ſhew ever ſuch Tokens of Trouble and Anguiſh for his Sins, tho' he *water his Couch with his Tears*, and humble himſelf in Sackcloth and Aſhes, yet unleſs he renounce and forſake them, all his Grief will turn to no Account to him, as to his everlaſting Welfare. It may either ſtave off temporal Evils, as it fared with * *Ahab*, and the † *Ninevites*; or may leſſen them, as in the Caſe of ‖ *David*, and of (*a*) *Reboboam*, and the Princes of *Iſrael*, but will never entitle him to eternal Happineſs. It is not his being ſorrowful for what he has done amiſs, in what Degree ſoever it be, that will denominate him a Child of God, unleſs he conſtantly take Care to do ſo no more. *When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right*, we know aſſuredly, that *he ſhall ſave his Soul alive*; but I do not ſee what Ground he can have to hope for Salvation upon any eaſier Condition. And hereto agrees that of St. *Peter* to the *Jews*, *Repent, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out*; plainly intimating the Inſufficiency of whatever Repentance, that is not attended with Converſion and Amendment. And our bleſſed Lord himſelf ſeverely rebukes ſuch as profeſſed a great Zeal and Honour for him, but did not give a due Attendance to his Laws, ſo as ſtedfaſtly to practice whatever he had requir'd of them. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the Things which I ſay?* Whence it neceſſarily follows, that we muſt never dare to allow our ſelves in any one Sin whatever, as if we could hope to be ſav'd whilſt we continue in it.

* 1 Kings 21. 27, 28, 29.

† Jonah 3. 10.

‖ 2 Sam. 12. 13, 14.

(*a*) 2 Chr. 12. 6, 7, 8.

Ezek. 18. 27.

Acts 3. 19.

St. Luke 6. 46.

Euſeb.

Euseb. This is a very proper and necessary Direction; but is not sufficient to satisfy the Consciences of most Enquirers. And the Reason is plain, because the Weakness of our Nature is such, and the Subtilty of our Adversary, and his Temptations are so prevalent, that even when People have resolved well, and set themselves seriously to put their good Resolutions in Execution, yet they too often find the sad Effects of their Frailty, in relapsing into some of those Sins they had but a little before so avowedly renounc'd. It is to their Shame and Sorrow that they fall in this Manner; yet it is plain they do it. Your Opinion therefore is desir'd concerning such, whether they are to look upon themselves as in a State of Salvation, or not.

Theod. This is a Case that has its Difficulties, and I should for that Reason be glad to see it well determin'd by some more learned and judicious Casuist. But however, since you have put it to me, I will endeavour to give you the best Light into it that I can. Here therefore I must observe, that whensoever the Relapses proceed from a direct and deliberate Choice of the Will, though it be but now and then, if I say that in this Case the Person falls from his State of Salvation, till he shall have made his Peace with God, by a hearty Repentance and Sorrow for them, and new Resolutions of a better Obedience for the future, this is no more than to me seems to be fully warranted by what the Prophet *Ezekiel* proclaims in the Name of God to the *Jews*, and by Parity of Reason to all Mankind. *The Righteousness of the Righteous shall not deliver him in the Day of his Transgression —— neither shall the Righteous be able to live in*

Relapses into Sin are very dangerous.

Ezek. 33. 12.

in the Day that he ſinneth. And the learned Dr. *Hammond* had therefore good Reaſon to ſpeak of ſuch a Sin, as * *ſauciating and wounding the Soul, putting it for a Time into a bloody direful Condition,* ſuch as that *ſhould God before Repentance ſtrike, for ought we know, there would be no Remiſſion; and ſo, fearful would be the End of that Soul.* And ſo ſays Biſhop *Taylor,* † *When he* [the Penitent] *prevails regularly and daily over his Sin, then is he in a State of Regeneration; but let him take heed, for every voluntary or choſen Sin is a mortal Wound.* But to put the Caſe ſomewhat more favourably: Suppoſing theſe Relapſes are not purely of a direct and deliberate Choice, but proceed only from a Want of due Care to prevent them, by guarding the Avenues that lead to them, and ſetting our ſelves reſolutely to oppoſe ſuch Temptations as threaten to betray us into them; yet ſtill I ſee no ſufficient Reaſon to convince me, that they are not of a deadly and pernicious Conſequence, and a ready Way to everlaſting Deſtruction, till ſincerely repented of. I make no Queſtion but Almighty God will ſoon be prevail'd with to forgive them, where he ſees the Mind rightly diſpos'd, though perhaps not yet come to that Perfection it is to labour after. But till he is humbly and penitently ſought to for Pardon, I am very much afraid that theſe Sins, though not ſo commonly repeated as formerly, nor ſo deliberately and reſolutely, will nevertheleſs expoſe the Actor to eternal Torments, as certainly, though not to the ſame Meaſure of them. At leaſt it is not ſo

* Of Conſcience. Sect. 46.
† Un. Neceſſar. Chap. 7. Sect. 7.

certain

certain that they will not, as that a Man may venture his Salvation upon it. And I am therefore very ſure that each one, upon every Relapſe of this Nature, ought to look upon himſelf as indiſpenſably oblig'd, to riſe out of it with all the Speed that may be, whereby to recover that happy State, from which he has fallen, and to give himſelf no Manner of Reſt till he has done it. But to proceed one Step farther, and ſtate the Caſe yet more favourably. Suppoſe the Man does heartily reſolve againſt theſe Sins, and ſtrive to conquer them, and has done it to a good Degree, but wonted evil Habits, his ſinful Companions, and his own corrupt Nature, ever and anon prevail againſt his good Purpoſes and Endeavours, and ſo he falls, though but ſeldom, into ſome ſingle Acts of them; here you would know what ſuch an one may think of himſelf.

Euſeb. That is what I deſire.

Anchith. And what I ſhould be glad to hear well determin'd.

Theod. Now of ſuch an one I muſt needs believe, that he is in the right Way towards the Kingdom of Heaven. But I am ſorry I muſt add moreover, that unleſs he keep on his Pace more ſteadily, and be more wary of the Impediments he meets in his Paſſage, or at leaſt be very quick in turning back, when ever he finds himſelf out of his Road, I cannot but much doubt whether ever he will enter into that bleſſed Place. He is got to the very Borders of Salvation; but nevertheleſs if he reſt there, and do not ſtep over to the other Side, he will ſtill be in Danger of falling into the Pit, which he has almoſt eſcap'd, but has not yet left quite behind him. Theſe Relapſes being

being the Effects of his former vicious Habits, it ſeems to me, that he is to anſwer for them upon that Account; becauſe though not indulged at preſent, it is however his own Fault, that they ever got, and ſtill retain ſuch Power over him. And it is therefore very ſuſpicious, that each of theſe is a Return into that State, out of which he had ſcarce reſcued himſelf. Such an imperfect Penitent is like a Man, that has ventur'd too far into the Water, and is in Danger of Drowning, labouring for Life, but whether he ſhall hold out to recover the Shore, is uncertain; Or like him that takes a great deal of Pains to get up the Hill before him, but ſlips, and is ready at every Step to tumble down again, when come almoſt to the Top of it. He has in a manner ſubdued his Enemy, yet has not ſo totally diſabled him, but that he is ſtill to take heed that he be not unexpectedly ſlain by him. He may have ſome Hopes in God's Mercy, but not without a great Mixture of Fear, leſt the Progreſs he has hitherto made, be not ſufficient to qualify him for thoſe bleſſed Manſions, which are promis'd only *to him that overcometh.* And his only ſure Courſe in this Caſe is, to compleat his Repentance, to reſolve, and watch, and ſtrive, and faſt, and pray, againſt theſe Remainders of his evil Habits, and never give over, till by ſhaking them quite off, he has cleared his Title to a better State. This is the ſafeſt Reſolution of all his Doubts, and will make it eaſy for him to determine, what Portion he is to expect, when he comes into the other World. But till this be done, no Wonder if it be full of Perplexities, and Diſtruſts, leſt after Death he ſhould awake in everlaſting Miſery and Sorrow. I will not

Rev. 3. 21. & 27. 1.

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take upon me to give my Opinion positively against him in the mean Time; but I must say, his Case is so very doubtful and dangerous, that I dare not assure him of Salvation, till he shall have got out of it. I would much rather beg of him to put an End to the Question, by going on to such a Measure of Perfection, and such a compleat Victory over his Lusts, as may shew him to be indeed *Born of God.* Which till he does, he will find this Effect of his *imperfect partial* Obedience, that if it does not exclude him out of Heaven, as there is too just Cause to fear it will, unless a speedy Repentance follow upon his Miscarriages, he will be left, in the mean Time in the Dark, as to his future State, and will have his Mind perpetually haunted with Jealousies and Suspicions of what will become of him, when he shall be taken hence. I speak not any Thing of this to dishearten Persons, when they come to lie upon their Sick-Bed, and are taking a Review of their Lives past, in order to their Departure hence. But out of pure Charity and Love to them, to put them upon an effectual Preparation for this Time, that they may neither have their great Work then to do, nor may go out of the World with false Hopes and Expectations, crying to themselves *Peace, Peace, when* there is *no Peace.* As in Truth there cannot be, when there is any one known Sin unrepented of. Forasmuch as till a Penitent has overcome his former vicious Habits, though earnestly and seriously endeavouring it, he can never clear his Title to a better State, it highly imports him therefore to go on striving, and give no Rest to his Soul, till he has got the Mastery over them.

Euseb.

Sins of Ignorance and Infirmity, or sudden Surprize, not Destructive of Salvation.

Euseb. But what say you to Sins of Ignorance, Surprize and Infirmity? How shall a Man do to emerge out of these, since after all the Care that can be taken, we are still liable to them, and cannot rid our selves of them?

Theod. No, nor ever shall whilst you continue in this World. These are such Fruits of our present feeble Constitution, as will not fail to attend us all the Days of our Lives. But then it is to be considered, that there is a great Disparity betwixt these and wilful Sins, both as to their Guilt, and as to the Danger of them.

Euseb. I do not doubt but all wilful Sins are much more offensive to Almighty God, than those that are Involuntary, and far more destructive to the Sinner. And my Question therefore was not intended to mean, what Comparison is between them; but purely as to the latter, under what Censure they fall, and what is like to be the Effect of them? We all find to our Sorrow, that we cannot live free from them in this mortal State; and it is therefore of great Concernment to all, to know what Judgment Almighty God will pass upon us for them. And this is what I intended to entreat your Answer to; and I hope I shall obtain it.

Theod. It is a miserable Case, and a great Unhappiness, that we are not able to serve God with a perfect and willing Obedience; as the Law requires. But it is what we all find too true; and have therefore abundant Cause to be deeply humbled for it. Yet let me tell you, that our Case is by no Means desperate upon this Account. It is a merciful and gracious God, to whom we are accountable for them. And, for ever praised be his Holy Name, he has found out a Remedy for us,

by the Death of our bleſſed Saviour, through whom we need not fear the Remiſſion of ſuch Sins as are unfeignedly repented of, and thenceforth watchfully reſiſted to the utmoſt of our Power. This is the Difference betwixt the Firſt and Second Covenant, that the one required a perfect ſinleſs Obedience, without making Allowance, ſo much as for the unavoidable Infirmities of humane Nature; but the other freely promiſes Forgiveneſs to ſuch as are *pure in Heart*, and *Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs*. And ſo long as they are ſincere and hearty in the Performance of their Duty, they need not doubt of their Reward, though they have not attained to that Perfection, as to ſerve God with the ſame Exactneſs that the Bleſſed Beings above do. He conſiders our Frame and Conſtitution, and does not expect the Service of Angels, but of Men from us; and will be ſure to make his Allowances accordingly, where he obſerves an unfeigned Deſire to pleaſe him. Inſomuch that whoſoever acquits himſelf to the beſt of his Ability, may ſafely comfort and encourage himſelf in a full Aſſurance; that *if there be firſt a willing Mind*, a ſincere and unfeigned Deſire and Endeavour to approve himſelf a true Diſciple of the ever bleſſed *Jeſus*, *it is accepted according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not*. If it were not ſo, there were no Hope of Salvation for the beſt of Men; inaſmuch as there is no Man living, how righteous ſoever in other Reſpects, that offendeth not through unavoidable Infirmity. *There is not a juſt Man upon Earth, that doth good and ſinneth not*, as the Wiſe-man teaches. And again to the ſame Purpoſe, *Who can ſay I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin?* As much

S. Matt. 5. 8.

vir. 6.

2 Cor. 8. 12.

Eccles. 7. 20.

Prov. 20. 9.

as

as to ſay, None can truly affirm that he has no ſuch unruly Affections or Paſſions remaining in him, that ſometimes unexpectedly diſcompoſe his righteous Soul, and tranſport him beyond his juſt Bounds. This, as the Wiſe-man notes, is what none can pretend to on this ſide Heaven. And ſo ſays St. *John*, *If we ſay that we have no Sin, we deceive our ſelves, and the Truth is not in us*; and again, *If we ſay that we have not ſinned, we make him a Lyar, and his Truth is not in us.* Which Words are ſpoken ſo indefinitely, as to ſhew that they extend to Mankind in General, teaching that there are none that live free from all Manner of Sin. And yet, as if this were not enough, the Apoſtle St. *James* affirms it to be univerſally true, that there is none, no one of all Mankind, who has not his Defects and Slips. *In many Things*, ſays he, *we offend All*; Ἅπαντες πταίομεν, *we All*, the beſt and holieſt not excepted, have our Falls, and leſſer and more pardonable Miſcarriages; ſuch as in the Old Teſtament are called *the Spots* of God's Children. *They have corrupted themſelves, their Spot is not the Spot of his Children*; "That is, ſays "† *Ainſworth*, not ſuch a Spot, or Blemiſh, as "is in the Sons of God through Infirmity, "whereto all are ſubject, but ſuch as is in a "perverſe and crooked Generation, that will "not be reclaimed from their Vices." So that it ſeems, even the Children of God, ſuch as he owns for his Sons and Daughters, are not without their *Spots*, their Slips, and Failures; but all Men are Sinners in ſome Reſpect, and even ſuch who, in our Saviour's Phraſe, *need*

1 S. Joh. 1. 8, 10.

S. Ja. 3. 2.

Deut. 32. 5.

† *In Loc.*

no Repentance. Sins of Infirmity none can escape, not even those who are most circumspect in all Respects, and the most careful that can be to abstain from all others. It was the peculiar Privilege of our blessed Lord, when he assumed our Nature, that he *was in all Points tempted like* as we are, yet without Sin. But no meer Son of *Adam* may pretend to the same Exemption, this being a pure Effect of the Conjunction of the Divine with the Humane Nature. But then for our Encouragement, though we cannot live without these Frailties, our Comfort is, that there is a Remedy offered for them, through the Mediation of our Saviour and Redeemer. *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And he is a Propitiation for our Sins; and not for ours only, but for the Sins of the whole World.* And if for all our Sins, then more especially for such as are committed thro' Inadvertence, and Weakness, and because we cannot help it. As is also implied in the forecited Words, *They are not the Spots of God's Children.* For if such remain *God's Children*, notwithstanding these *Spots*, then must it follow that their *Spots* are forgiven them, and so do not at all endanger their everlasting Welfare. In a Word, Our God is, as I said, a gracious God and merciful; and will favourably accept of such an Obedience, as he knows us able to perform; nor ought any to distrust his Kindness, only because they have not done that, which it was impossible for them to do, and will be, whilst they are Men and not Angels, and are militant here on Earth, and not triumphant in Heaven. The natural Consequence of which Doctrine is, that our Sins of Infirmity shall most certainly

S. Lu. 15 7.

1 S. Joh. 2. 2.

be forgiven upon a general Repentance; ſo the good Chriſtian has no Reaſon to doubt of his Salvation upon their Account.

Euſeb. Thus you have fully proved the little Reaſon there is for any of us to be in Fear upon the Account of our Sins of Infirmity. But you have not yet told us, how to diſtinguiſh theſe Sins from ſuch as are Wilful and Damnable. Which is a Point of great Conſequence, and the Clearing whereof will tend very much to the Satisfaction of the Mind; and without ſome Knowledge whereof, the good Man will not be able to paſs a true Judgment upon himſelf.

Which theſe Sins are.

Theod. This is a Queſtion too nice to be eaſily reſolved, and a through Diſcuſſion whereof would take up more Time, than can be allowed for it at preſent. Wherefore I ſhall not pretend to give you ſo full an Anſwer to it, as you may expect, but only to preſent you with ſome few Obſervations, which I hope will give ſome Light into it, and in ſome Meaſure ſatisfy your Deſire: And here I muſt plainly own, that it is abſolutely impoſſible to furniſh you with a compleat Catalogue of Sins of Infirmity, whereby for each one to diſtinguiſh which Sins are ſuch, and which not; and for a very good Reaſon, becauſe the ſame Acts which in ſome Men are the Effects of Weakneſs, and are pure involuntary Miſcarriages, may be Wilful in others, and even in the ſame Perſons too, at other Times and in other Circumſtances. At one Time, and under one Sort of Temptation, they may be leſs able to withſtand them, than at another. And ſometimes again they may be leſs watchful againſt them, or at leaſt againſt the Temptations that lead to them, and ſo they may become

become in ſome Degree wilful, though not deliberately and reſolutely deſigned. And if what is a Sin of Surreption and Surprize at one Time, may become a wilful Tranſgreſſion at another in the ſame Perſon, it is eaſy to ſuppoſe that it may be much more ſo in different Perſons. One Man is not ſo cholerick naturally as another; and ſo that may be an inexcuſable Exceſs of Paſſion in him, which yet is pardonable in another, who cannot throughly Maſter theſe unruly Motions in himſelf, though he ever ſo heartily deſire and endeavour it. Another is of a timorous Conſtitution, eaſily affrighted by any ſudden Surprize, and ſo is ſometimes put upon doing inconſiderately what he ought not, and what he would have been ſure not to have done, if he had been Maſter of his own Thoughts and Deſigns, and had Time to weigh what he was venturing upon. Which makes his Caſe very different from theirs, who have more Power over themſelves, and a more undaunted Spirit, and greater Preſence of Mind, and ſo have their Thoughts at command, and can ſuddenly recollect with themſelves what is to be done in ſuch an Exigence, and how apparently they muſt offend God, and take the ready Way to ruine themſelves, if they act otherwiſe. * The Soldiers in *Julian*'s Army, who were induced to offer Sacrifice, under the miſtaken Notion of paying an uſual Reverence to their Sovereign, before whom they did it, ſoon declared ſuch an Abhorrence of

* Περοχθμαλι νόμε ϗ ἀρχαιότητ, ἀδ' εἰς γῦν ἔλαβον ὃ ἁμάρτανον. Sozom. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 5. c. 17.

Μικρῷ πυεὶ ϗ χρυσίῳ, ϗ διὰ κνίσης ὀλίγης ἔπιπλον, ἀδὲ πῦ ἑαυτῶν σφαγὴν εἰδότες οἱ πλεῖς. Greg. Naz. Στηλιτ. α.

all Idolatry, and of themſelves becauſe of it, that every one might ſee this was an involuntary Crime in them; which yet had it been done conſiderately, and upon due Information, would have entered them in the Number of Apoſtates from Chriſtianity, as themſelves openly acknowledged, as ſoon as they were made ſenſible of what they had been doing. And their Guilt was nothing like that of their Companions, who did the ſame Thing knowingly, and for *the ſake of what they are like to get by it.* And divers other like Caſes there are, where the ſame Action is ſometimes an Involuntary, and at other Times a voluntary Sin, and whoſe Guilt therefore varies accordingly.

Anchith. Here you leave a Man at great Uncertainty; and take a ready Way inſtead of Satisfying, to encreaſe his Doubts and Fears.

Theod. I think I cannot be ſaid to leave the Man at great Uncertainty; but at ſome I do, and inevitably muſt leave him. Becauſe, as I ſaid, there is no certain Diſtinction betwixt theſe Sins, that will hold in all Caſes, ſo as that it can be ſaid, ſuch and ſuch Sins are, and will be Sins of Weakneſs, and all other choſen and wilful Sins. However, to make the Difference between them as evident as I can, I think, *Firſt*, That wandring Thoughts and Heavineſs in our Devotions, though when indulged, they are certainly wilful Sins, yet when we ſtrive againſt them all we can, arming our ſelves againſt them by ſuch Meditations before-hand, as may ſeem moſt likely to

[a] Τῷ φαινομένῳ κίνδυνι ἀλλεσθῆναι ἐς. Sozom. ubi ſupra.

prevent

prevent them, and in the Act of Worſhip applying our ſelves, to get our Minds into the moſt pious and ſerious Poſture we are able, ſtudying to confine our Thoughts purely to the Buſineſs we are about, and to exert our utmoſt Fervour and Devotion, I think, I ſay, in this Caſe, our Coldneſs and Wandrings cannot poſſibly be reckoned more than the natural Effects of Weakneſs and Infirmity. *Secondly*, The ſame I ſay of Carnal and Atheiſtical, or any Sort of vicious Fancies, or Deſires injected into the Mind, and which could not be foreſeen, or prevented: If theſe be cheriſhed, and meet with Encouragement there, they thereby become our own, and muſt be looked upon as wilful Sins. But had they been immediately rejected, with Deteſtation and Abhorrence, they had been either Sins of Weakneſs, or poſſibly no Sins at all, becauſe not properly our own, but ſuch Temptations rather as our Adverſary had contrived to aſſault us with. *Thirdly*, To theſe alſo may be added Sins of pure and unaffected Ignorance, when we have uſed the beſt Means we could for our Information, but do not yet ſee the Evil and Miſchief of them, nor know them to have been forbidden us. *Fourthly*, And ſuch likewiſe I take ſtrong and almoſt invincible Prejudices to be, when a Man unfeignedly ſets himſelf to make an impartial Judgment of any Matter in debate, but after all his heartieſt Endeavours to ſatisfy himſelf, has not yet been able to conquer the erroneous Notion he had before conceived of it, and which perhaps he ſucked in with his Mother's Milk, ſo that it has ever ſince grown up with him, and by this Means has got a powerful Aſcendant over him, that Occaſions wrong

Conceptions in him, and ſo leads him into unſeen Errors of Practice, as well as of Judgment. *Fifthly*, Of this Sort alſo I take all Sins of meer Surprize and Inadvertency to be, when a Man beyond the Intent of his Heart is overtaken by a Temptation before he is aware of it, and ſo not having Time to conſider, can hardly be ſaid in any Senſe to have conſented to what he did; when the Suddenneſs of the Aſſault allows him not to repreſent to himſelf thoſe Miſchiefs of it, and Arguments againſt it, which could hardly have failed of deterring him from the leaſt Thought of giving Way to it; through the Want whereof it is, that the Temptation becomes too powerful for him. In this Caſe he is like a Man that is unexpectedly ſeized and bound by an Enemy, or a Robber, againſt whom he could have defended himſelf, if he had had warning Time enough to draw his Sword, or take out his Piſtol; or like one half aſleep, who inconſiderately does, what he would by no Means have ſuffered himſelf to do at another Time, when perfectly awake, and Maſter of himſelf. Such are ſudden immoderate Acts of Paſſion, together with the lighter Effects and Conſequences of them, which ſeem not to proceed ſo properly from the Actor himſelf, as from the Surprize he Acts in; I mean, ſuppoſing him to be one that earneſtly ſtudies to govern his Paſſions according to the Rules of Reaſon and Religion, and is only now and then hurried away by them againſt his Will. *Sixthly*, Such again, I account all unavoidable Imperfections in the Performance of our Duty; not only our wandring and unſeaſonable Thoughts in our Devotions, which I mentioned before, but moreover our Want of due Gra-

titude

titude to God for all his Mercies, of true Humiliation for our Sins, of Love to God, of Truſt in his good Providence, and the like. When we have theſe Virtues planted in our Souls, and do ſtudy to cultivate and improve them to the beſt of our Abilities, but not to that Degree we earneſtly deſire we could, we may however comfort our ſelves with this Conſideration, that theſe and ſuch like Defects and Imperfections, if they be to be inſerted in the Catalogue of our Sins, muſt yet be put amongſt thoſe that are Involuntary, ſince we find by ſad and long Experience, that we are not able to get above them, though we ever ſo heartily and watchfully endeavour it. *Laſtly*, To theſe I only ſubjoin Sins of Forgetfulneſs; when a Man fully reſolves to perform ſuch a Duty at ſuch a Time, or in ſuch a Place; and has really convenience of doing it; but in the mean while ſome unuſual Accident or Occaſion intervening diverts his Mind, and puts this Deſign quite out of his Thoughts for the preſent, ſo that he remembers nothing of it till it is too late. This is a Fault of the Head, not of the Heart or Will, and will no doubt be interpreted by Almighty God, as the Effect of our mortal feeble Conſtitution, and will therefore have an anſwerable Allowance made for it. Theſe are the moſt remarkable Sins of Infirmity; but I cannot ſay they are All, nor that they are Always ſuch, becauſe the Nature of them may be much altered by Circumſtances, and if at any Time indulged, they may by this Means become highly criminal, wilful and provoking Sins. And now on the contrary, under the Notion of wilful Sins, I preſume, theſe at leaſt are deſervedly to be concluded, and to

Which Sins are wilful.

be lamented and bewailed as ſuch. 1. *All Habitual Sins*, Which though by the Power of Cuſtom they are grown familiar, and have acquired a great Meaſure of Strength, and ſo are hard to be overcome, yet are they highly aggravated by the frequent Repetition of them, and unleſs duly repented of, muſt inevitably end in everlaſting Deſtruction. Where by Habitual Sins, I do not mean ſuch Defects and Weakneſſes as I mentioned before, which cleave faſt to us, and are not to be ſhaken off by all the Diligence we can uſe to get rid of them; but ſuch irregular, unchriſtian Practices as any proceed in, without heartily ſtriving againſt them, or trying the Means preſcribed in order to a Conqueſt over them. No Sin is a Sin of Infirmity that a Man does not hate, and which he does not in good Earneſt ſet himſelf to oppoſe, and uſe his hearty Endeavour to free himſelf from it. 2. *All Known and Deliberate Sins.* It argues a ſtrange Depravity of Mind, when Sinners ſee the Evil they are about to commit, and have Time to weigh both the Guilt and Danger of it, and yet reſolve not to be deterred from it: How ſmall ſoever the Sin may be in other Reſpects, this deliberate Choice of it implies a great Degree of Guilt, and moſt certainly leaves no Room to queſtion whether it be wilful, or not. 3. *All Sins not accompanied with an unfeigned Repentance, as ſoon as they are taken Notice of.* Whenever a good Man falls into an involuntary Offence againſt God, he is no ſooner made ſenſible of his Fault, but he is preſently grieved for it, his Soul is full of Trouble, and he can have no Reſt, till he has humbled himſelf for it, and endeavoured in the moſt ſubmiſſive Manner to

to obtain its Pardon. * *Ariſtotle* has noted it long ago, as a Mark of an involuntary Lapſe, that it is attended with Sorrow and Repentance. And the Obſervation holds good, as well on the contrary, and always will, That that Action can have no Diſagreement with the Will, that the Actor can reflect upon with Satisfaction, or even with Indifferency, and an Unconcernedneſs for it. For though a Confeſſion of Sin, and Sorrow for it, is no infallible Evidence of a true Repentance, until accompanied with Amendment; yet muſt it be admitted on the other Hand, that a Sin not attended with ſuch a Sorrow, and Self-abaſement in the Sight of God, upon the Diſcovery of it, has ſo far the Approbation of the Mind, that the Offender can have no real Averſion to it. And it muſt therefore be owned for Truth, that whoſoever can reflect upon a Sin thus committed, without a hearty Regret, and Remorſe of Conſcience for having committed it, is no longer to be looked upon as an Enemy to it. And by conſequence, whether he conſider it before, or not, his Acquieſcence in it afterwards is a ſufficient Proof, that it is to be reckoned amongſt his allowed and wilful Sins. 4. *Such Sins whereto we knowingly expoſe our ſelves.* It is not enough that I reſolve againſt my Sins, but I muſt reſolve too againſt the known Occaſions of them. For ſo long as I am content to put my ſelf in the Way of theſe, how firm ſoever my Reſolutions be, it is Odds but I ſhall ſoon be overcome. For inſtance; Let the Drunkard

* Ἀκόλαστον δὲ τὸ ἀπλυτον, καὶ ἐν μετανοίᾳ. Ad Nicom. l. 3. c. 1.

ever

ever ſo ſeriouſly reſolve againſt Intemperance, or the luſtful Perſon againſt his unlawful Embraces, yet unleſs the one take Care to withdraw from his wonted ill Companions, and the other avoid the Society of lewd Women, they will be in apparent Danger of returning to their former vicious Courſes, or at leaſt of falling into ſome of thoſe Acts of Wickedneſs they had been ſo long accuſtomed to. And whenever they do ſo, how far ſoever they had been from deſigning it, yet becauſe they had fooliſhly laid the Snare, for betraying themſelves into ſuch a Fall, they are accordingly to reckon it amongſt their wilful Sins. So when one in a drunken Fit commits an Act of Adultery, of Robbery, or of Murder, which he would have abhorred the Thoughts of, had he been ſober, and in his right Senſes; though his Drunkenneſs was the real Cauſe of his Wickedneſs, yet is he by no Means to look upon it as a Sin of Weakneſs, becauſe his Drunkenneſs, which occaſioned it, was not ſo: Had he acted the ſame Part in a Fit of Diſtraction, his Diſtemper would have made it a Sin of Infirmity; becauſe his Want of a right Underſtanding, which was the only Cauſe of his Miſcarriage, being an involuntary Misfortune, and what he could no Way avoid, he is not to be condemned, but pitied rather for all the natural ill Effects of that. But the Caſe is very different in the Inſtance before us. For Drunkenneſs being a wilful Sin, which the Sinner might and ought to have abſtained from, and which he had not fallen into but through his own Fault, he is therefore anſwerable for all the Conſequents of it, and this amongſt the reſt. And ſo it is in

in other like Caſes. The free Choice of the Sinner, when in a Capacity of making it, being the Cauſe of the Cauſe, is conſtrued likewiſe to be the Cauſe of its Effect, and ſo makes that a wilful Sin, which otherwiſe would not have been ſo. 5. *All Sins committed againſt the Dictates and Admonitions of Conſcience, cautioning to abſtain from them.* Some, as has been already obſerved, lay it down as a Mark of a regenerate Perſon, that he Sins with Reluctancy, and as they are pleaſed to apply St. *Paul's* Words, *what he would he does not, and what he hates, that he does.* Yet of ſuch an one I may much more truly ſay, notwithſtanding his Pretences to Religion and the Fear of God, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the Verſe immediately foregoing, that he is yet *Carnal, ſold under Sin.* For I would deſire any one to tell me, what ſurer Sign there can be of a corrupt Mind, than that when a Man ſees the Evil of Sin, and has Time to weigh and conſider it, and finds his Conſcience ſtart and recoil at it, and warn him againſt it as he loves either God, or his own Soul; what ſurer Sign, I ſay, there can be of a corrupt Mind, than for a Man to break through all theſe Admonitions and Reproofs, in order to the Gratification of his Luſts or Paſſions. If this is not a Proof that his Wickedneſs is wilful and choſen, it is impoſſible to tell what is. Rom. 7. 15.

Euſeb. What you affirm is ſo reaſonable, that I can ſee no Cauſe to queſtion the Truth of it.

Anthith. No Doubt it is. Be pleas'd therefore to proceed.

Theod. With your Leave then I ſhall obſerve to you, that though I cannot point to a Diſtinction

Diſtinction between Sins of Weakneſs and Wilfulneſs, that ſhall clearly and certainly hold in all Caſes; nevertheleſs I have ſo far endeavour'd to characterize each of them, as that I hope an honeſt-minded Man may, by the Help of what has been ſaid, be able to form a tolerable Judgment to whether Sort his Sins belong. Which is all I can pretend to in a Point, wherein it is impoſſible to have any ſtated general Rule that ſhall ſerve for all Emergencies, and ſuit with all Caſes. And for the farther Knowledge of them, every one muſt be left to his own Prudence, when he has firſt ſeriouſly examin'd and try'd his Doings by theſe Directions, and made an impartial Enquiry how much of Wilfulneſs, or of Weakneſs, Surprize or Ignorance, is in them. And I beſeech Almighty God to guide us all aright, that none of us ever impoſe upon himſelf in a Matter of ſuch everlaſting Importance to him.

Of what Sort Sins of Omiſſion are.

Euſeb. But pray *Theodorus*, now we are in, what do you ſay to Sins of Omiſſion? Under whether of theſe Heads do you place them?

Theod. Under both. I ſay of theſe as I do of thoſe of Commiſſion, that they belong certainly and univerſally to neither, but are ſometimes to be aſcribed to the one, and ſometimes to the other, accordingly as there is more or leſs of the Will in them. Some Omiſſions proceed from Ignorance, or Inconſideration, or Forgetfulneſs; and are pardonable upon this Account: Others are known, deliberate, and choſen, which makes a vaſt Difference in their Guilt, and ſhews plainly that they are wilful, and to be accounted for as ſuch. And ſo we find, in the Deſcription our Saviour gives us of the Proceedings of the Laſt Day, that

that Judgment will paſs upon the Uncharitable, for *not* having *fed the Hungry, and clothed the Naked*, and done other Offices of Kindneſs to the Diſtreſſed and Indigent. They are not charged with having robbed, or cheated, or oppreſſed and ruined their Neighbours, but only with not relieving them in their Streights, but withholding that Aſſiſtance which they might and ought to have afforded them. Yet for this our bleſſed Lord will ſay to them at the Great Day, *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting Fire, prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels.* Whence it is obvious to obſerve, the exceſſive Danger that may ariſe even from theſe Omiſſions, when indulg'd; inaſmuch as a Sinner may be everlaſtingly condemn'd for theſe, as well as for his Sins of Commiſſion; and that therefore we muſt not make too light of Omiſſions of our Duty, becauſe though they are frequently to be accounted amongſt our Sins of Infirmity, yet when wilful and indulged, they are highly Dangerous and Deſtructive. St. Mat. 15. 41, &c.

Euſeb. There is one Queſtion more I would gladly propoſe, if it were not for fear of being over Troubleſome.

Theod. Never fear that, good *Euſebius*.

Euſeb. What is to be thought of the many Defects, that uſually attend our beſt Services? Whether are theſe to be reckon'd to our Weak, or our wilful Sins? *And Defects in our Service of God.*

Theod. I thought this had been ſufficiently evident, from what has been ſaid already. But ſince you ſeem of another Opinion, I will tell you, that they are denominated either wilful, or not, according as they depend more or leſs upon our Conſent to, or Endeavours againſt

againſt them. If they be what, when we have done our beſt, we can no Way prevent, they are doubtleſs Infirmities only. But if we allow our ſelves in them, they hereupon change their Nature, and are thenceforward to be looked upon as wilful Sins. For Inſtance, in Prayer to God; when I have compos'd my ſelf with all the Devotion and Reverence I can, to repreſent my Wants before him, ſtudying by all the Ways in my Power to abſtract my Thoughts from all earthly, or carnal, or vain Objects, or whatever is foreign to the Buſineſs I am upon, and to ſend them up in a holy Fervor towards Heaven, if they however flag, and wander, do what I can to the contrary, theſe are queſtionleſs Sins of Infirmity. But if I come to worſhip God, in a careleſs and indifferent Manner, not ſeeking to attend to my Petitions, but freely entertaining the Mind with other Sort of Objects, that ſerve only to divert it from what I come about, I ſee not how they can then avoid the Imputation of becoming my own voluntary Iniquities, and wilful Sins. Or again, If when I appear thus in God's Preſence, I wiſh indeed my Thoughts were all along fix'd upon the Addreſſes I am making before him, but do not mind to keep them in order, nor try to recal them ſo ſoon as I perceive them to have gone aſtray, nor am troubled at their Roving after other Matters; here likewiſe it will be hard to ſay, that theſe are Sins of pure Infirmity, and have not ſomething of the Will in them. In the firſt of theſe Caſes, there is juſt Cauſe of Sorrow and Self-Abaſement, and to implore God's Mercy in the Pardon of my Weakneſs and Inability

Inability to ſerve him as I ought. But the other Two call for an Amendment, and ſubſequent Care to ſhew my ſelf more attentive and devout, before I can hope my Prayers will be heard, or theſe Miſcarriages in them will be forgiven me. Or farther, If we keep our Thoughts intent upon God, and good Things, but not upon the Matter of our preſent Addreſs, nor be ſo fervent in it as we might be, here likewiſe the Fault is our own. Or again, If we profeſs to love God, but do it not with the Affection that we ought, this ſo far as it is a natural Defect, and what we are ſorry for, but can no Way contrive to remedy, is our Unhappineſs, rather than our Sin. Not ſo, if I voluntarily ſet my Mind upon other Objects, preferring the Creature, of whatever Kind, before the Creator, *who is over all, God bleſſed for ever.* So when a Man is truly ſorry for his Sins, though not in ſuch a Meaſure as they deſerve, and withal is truly grieved that he is not more ſorry for them, this makes it plain, that the Defect of ſuch Sorrow is involuntary, and is accordingly to be lamented only as an unavoidable Infirmity. Inſomuch that, as the Honourable Mr. *Boyle* delivers this, as a good Sign of a true unfeigned Love of God, * *That that Man loves God as much as he ought, who loving him as much as he can, ſtrives to repair the deplored Imperfection of that Love, with an extream Regret, to find his Love no greater*; and that *ſuch a Sublimity of Love will beſt entitle you to the Conſolation accruing from that memorable Paſſage of St.* John, *where he ſays, that God is Love, and* 1 St. John 4. 16.

* Seraphick Love. p. 29, 30.

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he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him: So I take it to be no leſs true here, that the only ſure Evidence of a right Sorrow for your Sins, is to be ſorry both for having committed them, and for the Want of a deeper Sorrow for them. But whatever more of Sorrow is wanting, this being meerly the Effect of our Conſtitution, and not any voluntary Choice, it needs not be doubted but God, who is infinitely good, and who knows all our Defects and Weakneſſes, will never impute to our Condemnation, what he ſees thus utterly out of our Power.

Euſeb. Is there any Thing farther you would adviſe, in order to a right Judgment of our ſelves?

The Duty of Self-examination.

Theod. Yes. In order to the more ſucceſsful Application of the foregoing Rules, I would adviſe to have before you ſome ſuch Catalogue of the ſeveral Branches of our Duty, and our Violations of it, as may help you the more readily to call to Mind what your Sins have been, that you are now to repent of; ſuch as you have in Archbiſhop *Laud*'s Daily Office of a Chriſtian; the Confeſſion of Sins in Biſhop *Andrews*'s Manual of Directions for the Sick; towards the latter End of the *Whole Duty of Man*; and at the End of *the Common-Prayer the beſt Companion*; or of Mr. *Nelſon*'s excellent Companion for the Feaſts and Faſts of the Church; or in Biſhop *Taylor*'s Holy Dying, Chap. IV. Sect 8.; or Mr. *Kettlewell*'s Trial of the Soul, in his Companion to the Penitent; or more largely, in the Second Book of his Meaſures of Chriſtian Obedience; in Mr. *Sellars* Office for *Good-Friday*, in his Good Man's Preparation for a hap-

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a happy receiving of the Bleſſed Sacrament; or other Treatiſes of Devotion, and particularly in relation to the Lord's Supper. Such a Method will hardly fail of putting you in Mind of ſeveral Sort of Sins, whereinto you may at any Time have fallen, or at leaſt of the groſſer and more offenſive of them. And then, if you duly conſider, which of them were of Weakneſs, which of Wilfulneſs, which Involuntary, and which freely choſen; which you have repented of and forſaken, and which ſtill retain an Intereſt in you, it will be no difficult Matter to make a probable Judgment, perhaps a certain one, whether you be a Son of God, and like to be for ever Happy, or a Child of Wrath and Perdition. But then you muſt be ſure to deal fairly and candidly with your ſelf, judging by what you really find your ſelf chargeable with, neither leſſening nor excuſing your Sins, nor, on the other Hand, being too ſevere upon your ſelf, for ſuch Sins as it was not in your Power to avoid. *This is to be impartial.*

Euſeb. There is little Danger of People's being over-ſevere to themſelves, ſo as undeſervedly to condemn themſelves. I wiſh they would not more readily ſeek to excuſe themſelves from ſuch Guilt, which, like the poiſon'd Shirt to *Hercules*, ſtick ſo cloſe to them, that they know not how to get rid of it.

Theod. It is true, Men are readieſt to err on this Side, in favouring themſelves beyond what Almighty God will think reaſonable at the laſt Day. Though I muſt confeſs there are ſome few well-meaning Perſons, who are apt to err on the other Hand, by concluding themſelves in a worſe Condition, than they have Reaſon for; and ſo are tempted to deſpair of Pardon, when any other Man would take

their Caſe to be very ſafe. Both theſe Extreams are carefully to be avoided, as we would neither die in an impenitent State; nor deprive our ſelves of that Comfort, which would naturally ariſe from a well-grounded Senſe of God's Favour, and diſturb our Minds with unneceſſary Fears and Jealouſies, and unfit our ſelves for ſerving God, as we might otherwiſe have done; not to add farther, as we would not be tempted to deſpair of his Mercy, and thereby provoke him to withdraw it from us.

Euſeb. When is it you would have a Man thus examine himſelf?

The proper Times for it.

Theod. He is above all Times eſpecially concern'd to do it when he comes to be ſick, and Death looks him in the Face, and gives him Warning ſpeedily to make up his Accounts, leſt it be too late the next Day. But this ſhould be only in order to a Ballance of them. For he ought by no Means to defer this great Work till his latter End, but to be conſtant in it throughout the Courſe of his whole Life. In his firſt beginning his Repentance, or ſo ſoon as he comes to Years of Diſcretion and Underſtanding, ſo as to be capable of making a Judgment of himſelf, he muſt diligently and impartially review his Life paſt, and ſeriouſly conſider the Sins he has been guilty of, ſo far as he can recollect them, together with their ſeveral Aggravations, to humble himſelf for them, and to ſue to God for Pardon through Chriſt, and Grace to walk more holily for the future, to reſolve againſt the Repetition of them, and to arm himſelf againſt thoſe Temptations whereby he has been drawn into them, to obſerve how he may beſt guard himſelf againſt them, and to confirm his Purpoſes of Amendment, and

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a better Obedience for the remaining Part of his Life. And beſides, he is farther to remember, that he muſt not ceaſe here; but though he come to ever ſo perfect a Diſcovery of himſelf, he muſt be mindful always after to make a frequent Inſpection into his *Converſation*, to ſee that it be ſuch *as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt*, to lament and bewail what farther Tranſgreſſions he can diſcover in his future Conduct, and to renew his former Purpoſes of Amendment.

Euſeb. How oft do you think it neceſſary for a good Chriſtian *to examine himſelf* as you preſcribe?

Theod. The ſick Man muſt do it, as his Diſtemper allows him Time and Ability. But as to others, this Examination is in a particular Manner recommended by ſuch as have written of the Lord's Supper, and the due Celebration of it, as neceſſary in order to a worthy Attendance upon that ſacred Ordinance, and therefore always to be us'd before our Approaches to it; and more particularly upon Account of thoſe Words of the Apoſtle St. *Paul, Let a Man examine himſelf; and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.* And many Divines have imprudently preſs'd this Advice ſo far, that divers very good and truly devout Chriſtians chooſe rather to abſent themſelves, when graciouſly invited to that heavenly Banquet, than appear there without ſuch a previous Examination, when they have not Time for it. Which, tho' it be a great Error in them, it being much better to ſerve our Lord as well as our preſent Circumſtances will admit of, than not to do it at all; yet nothing can be more proper and becoming than ſuch a ſerious Examination upon every Notice timely given of a Sacrament,

1 Cor. 11. 28.

together with ſuch a Mixture of preparatory Devotion, as may tend to raiſe the moſt holy Affections in the Soul, may obtain the Pardon of its Sins, and ſo may qualify the Perſon worthily to commemorate our bleſſed Saviour's infinite Love in dying for us. But then beſides theſe, and other the like more ſolemn Times for Self-examination, he that would live agreeably to his moſt holy Profeſſion, will find it neceſſary for him to be frequently exerciſed in the Conſideration of his *own Ways*; to *call them* often *to Remembrance*, as the Pſalmiſt did, as highly uſeful in order to the *turning his Feet to God's Teſtimonies*. And if my Judgment ſignify any Thing in the Caſe, I ſhould direct, exhort, entreat, and beſeech him, to paſs no Day without it; that every Night before he compoſe himſelf to Sleep, he would *commune with his Heart upon his Bed, and be ſtill*; or rather, before he lays him down, would take a little Time to look back upon the ſeveral Occurrences of the Day paſt, to ſee how faithfully he had diſcharg'd his Duty, and would put the Author of the Golden Verſe's Queſtions to himſelf,

Pſal. 119. 59.

Pſal. 4. 4.

Πῇ παρέβην; τί δ' ἔρεξα; τί μοι δέον οὐκ ἐτελέσθη;

And ſee *what Good he has done that Day*; *what Duty he has ventur'd to omit*; *whether he has indulg'd any Vice*; and in ſhort, how he has demean'd himſelf in all Reſpects. This St. *Chryſoſtom* recommends, from thoſe Words of the Pſalmiſt, *Commune with your ſelves in your Chamber, and be ſtill*, directing that *after Supper, before a Man betake himſelf to his Reſt, when he is preparing for his Bed, and has none with him, but all is ſtill and quiet about him, he erect a Tribunal in*

In Pſal. 4. 5.

in his own Conſcience, and bring himſelf to a Trial, what Evil he has contriv'd the Day paſt, what Frauds he has committed, what Neighbour he has ſupplanted, what corrupt Inclinations he has gratified, and to paſs Judgment upon himſelf, accordingly. And would each Chriſtian conſtantly follow this Method, he would quickly become well acquainted with himſelf, would make his Repentance the perfecter, and more particular, would eaſe his Mind of the heavy Burden of paſt Sins, would ſoon have got over the Difficulty of his Enquiry, and reduc'd it into a little Compaſs, would find his Love to Sin turned to Hatred of it, would ſoften his hard Heart, and awaken his drowſy Conſcience, would prevent his Miſcarriages becoming Habitual, and would have a great deal the leſs to do whenever he comes to die. In a Word, this were the Way to make our Work eaſy, our Lives comfortable, and our End glorious. Nor will this be any troubleſome Buſineſs to thoſe who have been acquainted with it for a while. It muſt take up ſome Time at firſt, till it is grown familiar to them, and they know to what Failings they are moſt liable, and are moſt obliged to enquire after. But thenceforwards they will be readier for it, and ſo it will take up no long Time for the Diſpatch of it. A Quarter of an Hour, or perhaps but half ſo much every Night; it can be no great Burden to any one, to ſet aſide ordinarily for ſuch Reflection. And yet whoſoever well employs that Space conſtantly to this Purpoſe, will ſoon experiment the wonderful Advantage of it, in order to the Mortification of his Luſts and Paſſions, and hereby to his Growth in Grace, and a happy Preparation for a bleſſed Eternity.

Euſeb. Really *Theodorus*, what you ſay ſeems ſo highly reaſonable, that I begin to wiſh all that call themſelves Chriſtians would conſtantly put it in Practice. And for my own Part, I will begin by the Grace of God this Night; and I hope I ſhall continue in the daily Obſervance of it, as long as I live.

Theod. I beſeech you do; and you will ſoon find the good Effect of it. And I heartily wiſh you had begun it ſooner.

Euſeb. I will be ſure to try.

Theod. Pray do; and you will be ſure to thank me for my Advice. And now I am upon this Subject, give me Leave to preſcribe another Practice, which, though no Part of that Examination I have been treating of, is yet ſo highly uſeful, and ſo nearly allied to the Advice now given, that I cannot forbear mentioning it. It is this; that Men of Buſineſs in the World, would allow themſelves a little Time every Morning, to think beforehand what Company they are like to meet with that Day, what Undertakings to be engag'd in, what Difficulties of any Sort to ſtruggle with, and what Temptations they may probably have to encounter upon any of theſe Accounts, that they may the better provide againſt them, may be diligently upon their Guard when the Time comes, and ſo may preſerve their Integrity in the midſt of them. Such a ſhort Preconſideration in the Morning, and a Recollection again at Night, no one can make Trial of, but he will quickly be convinc'd of the admirable Expedience and Uſefulneſs of them.

Euſeb. I like your Preſcriptions ſo well, that I am reſolv'd to try both of them. And God grant I may do it effectually.

Anchith. I have been a watchful Hearer all this Time, and have very carefully attended to all your Diſcourſe; and I hope I both underſtood aright, and did retain the Meaning of the ſeveral excellent Rules you have laid down, whereby to make a true Judgment of the State of our Souls, and the Diſpoſition we are in for another Life. But that I may be ſure I do not miſtake your Meaning, if you pleaſe to give me Leave, I will briefly recapitulate what I take to be intended by them, and how I may obſerve them ſo as to be benefited by them.

Theod. A very ſeaſonable Motion! And to which I muſt neceſſarily Conſent.

Anchith. Then I will begin. And I beg you will pleaſe to ſet me right, if I either forget or miſtake.

Theod. I will be ſure to do it.

The Sum of theſe Directions.

Anchith. Having firſt remov'd the falſe Grounds of Satisfaction, by which People have been directed to impoſe upon themſelves, and ſhewn the Weakneſs and Inſufficiency of them, you next proceed to preſcribe ſuch proper Directions, as, if rightly purſued, may be a ready Means of Diſcovering each one to himſelf. To which you lay down this as an undoubted fundamental Principle, and which every one is to receive as ſuch, That there is no Hope of Salvation for him who allows himſelf in any wilful Sin. And no Doubt very truly, ſince the holy Scripture ſo totally condemns it, both declaring *the Wages of it to be Death*; and moreover affirming, that * *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all*; whereby is implied, that ſuch an one ſhall as ſurely be proceeded againſt as a Sinner, as he whoſe Tranſgreſſions are far more numerous. Hence that

Rom. 6. 23.

* St. Ja. 2. 10.

ſeems a natural Inference, which you obſerv'd in the next Place, that every wilful Relapſe into Sin returns a Man back into his former miſerable State, till he ſhall have ariſen out of it by a new Repentance. Every wilful Relapſe I ſay; for the Caſe you have ſhewn to be quite otherwiſe with our involuntary Offences, that thoſe will be pardon'd upon a general Repentance, and ſo our Salvation is not endanger'd by them. You have taught us alſo how to diſtinguiſh betwixt Sins of Weakneſs and Wilfulneſs. You have inſtructed us likewiſe how to judge of our Sins of Omiſſion, as belonging to either of theſe Claſſes, according as they are indulged or not. As alſo is the Caſe of our many Defects and Imperfections in the Service of God. And in order to a ſalutary Application of the whole to our own Advantage, have recommended a frequent, ſerious, and penitent Examination of our ſelves, to each one's conſtant Practice, and noted the proper Times for it.

Theod. You ſay right. This is the Sum of what I have been diſcourſing more at large. And if either of you have any Objection to make to it, I am ready to explain my ſelf to your farther Satisfaction.

Euſeb. I ſee no Cauſe for any Objection. But if you will give me Leave, I will propoſe an Inference from the Whole, which I think may reduce all to one Word.

Theod. That is eaſily done. And I know beforehand the Word you mean is *Sincerity*.

Sincerity the beſt Qualification for Eternal Happineſs.

Euſeb. It is ſo. For I think the Reſult of all is this; that a ſincere Endeavour to pleaſe God, and in nothing knowingly to offend him, is the Evidence of our being qualified for a future State of Happineſs. He that has this,

this, ſhall not fail of being accepted with God; and he that has it not, is ſure not to be accepted by him.

Theod. Moſt certainly. For God can neither love thoſe that are not heartily in his Service, nor reject thoſe that are. It is *the Heart* he calls for. And whereſoever this is right before him, we may ſafely depend upon his Favour. *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God*; which no wicked Man can do. The Sinner muſt not hope for ſuch a Privilege, as is not to be attained to without *Holineſs*. But ſince our Saviour has taught us, that *the Pure in Heart* have a Right to it; this is an evident Proof, that ſuch Purity of Heart is the Holineſs that capacitates for this Bleſſedneſs. Thus the wiſe Man invites to have a ſingular Regard to the Motions of the Heart; and gives this Reaſon for it, that our eternal Salvation has a peculiar Dependence upon them. *Hear my Son, and be wiſe, and guide thine Heart in the Way.* * *Keep thine Heart with all Diligence*, before or above all keeping, that is, with all the Care that may be, to preſerve it upright before God, *for out of it are the Iſſues of Life*; and according as this is well or ill diſpoſed, ſuch is thy Behaviour like to be outwardly, and ſuch thy State to all Eternity. So Almighty God commands the *Jews* to *circumciſe the Foreskin of their Hearts*, * to cut off and caſt away their naughty Affections, *and be no more ſtiff-necked*, as he had often complained they were. And by the Mouth of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, he threatens to puniſh them for the Wickedneſs of their Hearts, as ſurely as he

Prov. 23. 26.

St. Mat. 5. 8.

Hebr. 12. 14.

Prov. 23. 19.

* Chap. 4. 23. מִכָּל־ מִשְׁמָר.

Deut. 10. 16.

* Biſhop *Patrick* in loc.

would

would the *Edomites*, or *Moabites*, or any other of their Neighbours, for their Uncircumcision.

Jerem. 9. 25, 26. *Behold the Days come*, saith the Lord, *that I will punish all them that are circumcised, with the uncircumcised; Egypt and Judah, and Edom, and the Children of Ammon and Moab, and all that are in the utmost Corners, that dwell in the Wilderness; for all these Nations are uncircumcised, and all the House of Israel are uncircumcised in Heart.* Here the *Jews* you see are ranked amongst the Uncircumcised, because they were such in Heart, as the others were in the Flesh; they wanted that inward Circumcision, without which the outward Impression made in the Flesh, is of no Worth in God's Account. And on the contrary,

2 Chron. 31. 21. *Hezekiah* is commended, *and prospered*, because whatsoever he did in God's Service, *he did it with all his Heart.* And in the New Testament,

St. Luke 16. 15. says our Saviour to the *Pharisees*, *Ye are they which justify your selves before Men; but God knoweth the Heart.* *And divers other Places there are, where the Heart is declar'd to be what God respects; so that if this be not devoted to his Honour, all the Service we can pay him is like to stand us in little stead. And on the other Hand, if this be upright and clean, and we are inwardly bent upon his Service, we shall not need to despond, and to torment our selves for such less involuntary Miscarriages, as we find it out of our Power totally to prevent.

Euseb. But how shall I know whether my Heart be such as will approve it self before God?

* 1 Sam. 7. 24. 1 Chron. 28. 9. & 29. 17. & 2 Chron. 25. 2. Psal. 25. 4. & 51. 6. & 66. 18. & 73. 1. Prov. 21. 2. Rom. 2. 29. & 8. 7. Eph. 6. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 5. 1 St. Pet. 3. 15.

Theod.

Theod. You may know it by theſe Marks; which I ſhall very briefly mention, and ſo leave them to your own Conſideration, to make what farther Improvement you can of them. 1. If the certain Tenor and general Courſe of your Life be Holy. This is ſo neceſſary from the conſtant Doctrine of the Goſpel, declaring all Sin to be of a deadly Nature, and that it is in all Reſpects diametrically oppoſite to the Will of God, that whoſoever pretends to pleaſe God, can never give Way to it, without a great Degree of Hypocriſy and Inſincerity. 2. If your Care to pleaſe God be founded upon truly religious Principles and Motives. A Man may do many good Things, and yet be far from being a good Man, if they be done to a wrong End, or for ſome unworthy ſiniſter Deſign. If he be Temperate for his Health's Sake only, or Charitable out of Oſtentation and Vain-glory, or Fair in his Dealings for the Preſervation of his Credit and Reputation, or Patient of Affronts out of pure Cowardice, or Abſtemious out of Covetouſneſs, or Obſervant of his Times of Devotion out of Cuſtom; and becauſe he ſees others do it, or for the carrying on ſome worldly Intereſt, or becauſe his Time lies upon his Hands, and he knows not how otherwiſe to employ himſelf; ſuch an one miſerably deceives himſelf, if he thinks Almighty God will look upon this as an acceptable Service, whilſt he is conſcious to himſelf that he did it not for his Maker's Honour, but for his own Advantage. This ſhews him to be intent upon ſerving not God, but himſelf, and that all his good Deeds are done, either to bad Purpoſes, or at leaſt to ſuch as are unworthy of his moſt Holy Religion, and ſo can neither recom-

recommend him to Almighty God now, nor make him happy for ever hereafter. 3. If you be as ſtudious to ſerve God, and as afraid of offending him in Private as in Publick, in Bad Company as in Good, and when you are like to ſuffer, as when you hope to get by it. A true Chriſtian is Uniform in his Obedience, at all Times and in all Places ſtudying to approve himſelf, what he profeſſes to be, and never acting contrary to his Duty, with whatſoever Impunity he may do it in this World, or how little Notice ſoever may be taken of it. His Buſineſs is not to pleaſe Men, but God, whoſe Eye he knows is moſt aſſuredly upon him, who ſees into the cloſeſt Corner of the Heart, and to whom he muſt be accountable at the laſt Day. And whoſoever he be that takes a contrary Courſe, needs no other Argument to convince him of his Inſincerity, than that his Practice is not to be reconciled to his Profeſſion. A true Fear of God over-awes a Man at all Times, and in all Places and Eſtates, as well when it is againſt his Temporal Intereſt, as when on its Side, and will have the ſame Influence in the ſecret Chambers as in the open Streets, and will make a Man as unwilling to offend him, where no other Eye but his can ſee it, as in the Face of the greateſt Aſſembly. And whoſoever finds himſelf thus careful of his Duty, may juſtly look upon it, as an undeniable Token of his Sincerity. 4. If ſuch your Care to pleaſe God be without a Reſerve for any beloved Luſt or Inclination. A truly good Man owns himſelf obliged to an univerſal Obedience to the divine Commandments of the one Table, as well as of the other, and when contradictory to his own natural Temper and Deſires,

Deſires, no leſs than when moſt agreeable thereto: And by an Enquiry into his Converſation, and the Diſpoſition of his Mind in this Reſpect, a Man may find whether the Divine Will or his own be the more prevailing Principle in him; whether he is more concerned to pleaſe God, or himſelf; and in a Word, whether he be ſo ſincere and hearty in the Performance of his Duty as he ought, and profeſſes to be. 5. If you be watchful againſt leſſer Sins, as well as againſt thoſe of a groſſer and fouler Nature. It is not enough that we have an Abhorrence of ſuch crying Iniquities, as none but a very hardened Sinner will dare to venture upon. But a good Chriſtian, and an unfeigned Follower of our bleſſed Lord, will be continually upon his Guard againſt all Temptations to whatever deſerves the Name of Sin. He knows that every wilful Tranſgreſſion of his Duty, is a high Affront offered to the great and good God, whom he is bound to fear above all Things, and dares not venture upon it for all the World, how light a Matter ſoever others may make of it. Though divers even of our wilful Sins are comparatively little, he knows aſſuredly that none is really ſo in its own Nature; and therefore makes it his Buſineſs to keep from all Sins, and even from ſuch as are moſt common and leaſt condemned by the generality of Men. And till a Man is come to be thus watchful againſt *all Appearance of Evil*, I cannot ſee how he can ſatisfy himſelf of his Sincerity in the Service of God. 6. And laſtly, If you be truly humbled upon every unforeſeen Failure in your Duty, and thenceforward watchfully endeavour an Amendment. I have already obſerved, that

that ſuch a Sorrow for Sin committed, is not of it ſelf any Proof that a Man is really a good Man. But I may ſafely affirm it on the other Hand, as an undoubted Truth, that he who can ſuffer himſelf to be betrayed into any Sin, without being heartily concerned and troubled for it afterwards, is far from being what he ought to be. He muſt have little Reverence for Almighty God, and little Senſe of Duty to him, that can reflect upon his having diſobeyed his Laws, without being aſhamed, and troubled for it. But when a Man is ſo ſenſible of his having done amiſs in deviating from his Duty, that he heartily laments and bewails it, and not only ſo, but ſets himſelf with all his Might to walk more carefully for the future, this argues a right Diſpoſition of Soul in him. This is the beſt he is capable of doing towards making a Reparation for what he has done amiſs, and is a very good Sign, that he is ſincere in his Profeſſion. Theſe, my Friend, are the moſt obvious Marks of a ſincere Deſire to pleaſe God. And if theſe Fruits appear in your Converſation, you need not Queſtion, but the Root from whence they ſpring is ſound and good, and ſuch as through our bleſſed Saviour's Mediation, will nouriſh you to eternal Life.

Euſeb. Really *Theodorus*, you have given me ſuch ample Satisfaction, and ſet this great Point in ſo clear a Light, that I do not ſee what farther is to be deſired for letting a Man into the true State of his Soul, but only that he carefully apply himſelf, to make a right Uſe of the Method here preſcribed for it. Which I beſeech Almighty God to give us all Grace to do faithfully and impartially, and as in his Sight,

Sight, who knows us far better than we know our ſelves, and whom we are ſure we cannot deceive, though if we be not very careful and inquiſitive, or make a Judgment of our ſelves otherwiſe than by the Rules here laid down, we may deceive our ſelves to our own Deſtruction.

Anchith. This Diſcourſe has come very ſeaſonably for me, who am now upon the Buſineſs of reviewing my Life, and making my Peace with God, *before I go hence, and be no more ſeen.* And whoſe great Concern it is therefore to enquire narrowly into the State of my Soul, that I depart not hence with a falſe Peace, and ill grounded Hopes, and ſo be made ſadly to bewail the ill Effects of my Miſtake to all Eternity. I will therefore examine my ſelf by theſe Rules, that ſo I may ſee how the Caſe ſtands betwixt God and my Soul, and what Aſſurance I can promiſe my ſelf, that if I die now, as I am very like to do, I ſhall not be for ever Miſerable. And that I may do it as I ought, I humbly beg the Aſſiſtance of my God to *open mine Eyes, that I may ſee the wondrous Things of his Law,* and may diſcover and be truly Penitent for my manifold Tranſgreſſions of it.

A Prayer for Direction in order to a right Judgment of one's ſelf.

O *Lord God of Hoſts, who ſearcheſt the Heart, and trieſt the Reins, and obſerveſt all our Ways, to bring us to a ſtrict Account for them, and to render to every Man according to his Works; to thee I fly for*

for Assistance and Direction in this my languishing Condition. Discover me clearly to my self, that I may see how vain and foolish, how careless and negligent, how disobedient and undutiful I have been, and may be deeply humbled for it. And where I have faithfully and heartily endeavoured to please thee, though with great Weakness and Imperfection, make me sensible of this too, that through the Merits of our blessed Saviour, I may enjoy the Comfort of it. Teach me to pass a right Judgment upon my self, that I may neither presume upon thy Goodness, whilst I allow my self in any Iniquity, nor despair of thy Mercy and Forgiveness, when I do not. Mortify and subdue the Remainders of Corruption in me. Increase and perfect all my Graces, or whatsoever good Inclinations thou seest in me. And take me not hence, O gracious Lord, till thou shalt have fitted me for the Fruition of thine everlasting Kingdom. Hear me, O Lord, and grant me my Request, for the sake, and through the Merits of Jesus Christ, thine only Son, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Theod. The Good Lord hearken to you, and give you a gracious Answer. And so I recommend you to the divine Protection, hoping to wait upon you again to morrow.

Anchith. A thousand Thanks to you, good *Theodorus*, for all your Kindness. I thank you also *Eusebius*.

Euseb. I pray God be with you, and grant you a favourable Night, after this long Visit.

The End of the Fourth VISIT.

The Fifth VISIT.

The more immediate Preparation for Death.

Theophilus. OUR Friend *Eusebius* and I are come to see you, good *Anchithanes*; *Timotheus* and *Philogeiton* designed also to accompany us; but Business has fallen out cross, that they are forced to beg your Excuse till to morrow, when we are all to be here by a new Appointment. *Anchithanes's great Concern to die well.*

Eusebius. They fully intended to have come with us, and were heartily troubled at their Disappointment. But pray *Anchithanes*, how are you now?

Anchithanes. I thank God not very uneasy, either in Body, or Mind; but weaker and weaker; wearing away as you see. The good God of his Mercy fit me for my great Change, which seems to be approaching.

Theoph. I trust he has done it already, that you need not be sollicitous upon that Account.

Anchith. I hope it is done in a good Measure; yet not so, but that I have great Cause to pray to God to compleat it. And it is a Matter of that vast Consequence to my Soul, that I cannot be too careful about it. Which makes me beg what farther Assistance you can give in order to it.

Theoph. With all our Hearts.

Anchith. I am very weak, and much spent since you saw me last, and not like to continue any Time in this World, and would be glad to improve the small Remainder of my

Days, if at leaſt I have any yet remaining, to the beſt Purpoſes I can.

Theoph. What Service is it we can do you?

Anchith. When you did me the Favour, *Theophilus*, to viſit me formerly, you promiſed to inform me, how I might frame a right Judgment of my ſelf, ſo as to diſcern whether I be in the Favour of God at preſent, and in the Way to be ſaved hereafter. But *Theodorus*, I thank him, has been at ſo much Pains to teach me this, that I ſhall not now trouble you about it.

Theoph. What is it then you would deſire?

Of the Duties peculiarly incumbent on the Sick.

Anchith. To be taught what Duties are peculiarly incumbent upon one in my Condition, that lies upon the Bed of Sickneſs, and every Day expects his Diſſolution; as I now do.

Theoph. I know not how we can employ our Time better, if your Weakneſs will not make our Diſcourſe a Diſturbance to you.

Anchith. Aſſure your ſelves, it will not. For though I am much ſpent as to my Body, I thank God my Underſtanding is ſtill clear. And I hope I ſhall be able both to attend to, and practice what I ſhall learn from you.

Theoph. Do not think, *Anchithanes*, that we pretend to teach you, but only to refreſh your Memory, and bring to Mind what you may have let ſlip, during this Want of your Health.

Anchith. I ſhall not interrupt your good Deſign, by returning your Complement; but do beg the Favour of you to begin.

The Uſe he is to make of the little Time he has left.

Theoph. You are then to look upon your ſelf, as poſſibly upon the Brink of the Grave, ready to lanch into Eternity, in as uncertain a

a Condition as * *Damocles*, with his Dagger hanging over his Head, and threatning every Moment to drop upon him, and diſpatch him. Which Thought calls upon you to muſter up all your Forces, and be as induſtrious as poſſibly you can, in making a good Uſe of the few Sands that yet remain in your Glaſs. It is but a little Time you can promiſe your ſelf to work in, the Day being far ſpent, and *the Night, wherein no Man can work*, in all Appearance drawing on apace. There is none ſo weak, but God, if he ſee fit, can reſtore him. And we have known divers Perſons given over by the Phyſician, and doubtleſs in as low a Condition as your ſelf, that yet have recovered, and lived many Years after. But this being what you have little Reaſon to expect, you do very wiſely in laying aſide your Concern for this World, and employing your Thoughts wholly for the other. Your only Buſineſs is now to make what farther Preparation you can, for a happy Departure hence, and a bleſſed Eternity when you are gone.

Anchith. And how muſt I do this?

Theoph. I believe by this Time you find by Experience, that it is no great Matter a Man can do, when reduced to your helpleſs Circumſtances. Yet what he can muſt be done.

Anchith. Be pleaſed to give me your Directions, and I will obſerve them according to my Power.

Theoph. I ſhould have begun in the *Firſt* Place, with the firſt Thing our Church recommends in her *Rubrick for the Viſitation of the Sick*, which is, *To ſend to the Miniſter* of the

1. *To beg the Miniſter's Aſſiſtance.*

* Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. 5.

Pariſh, to beg his Aſſiſtance and Prayers. But inſtead of preſſing this upon you, I am rather to commend you for having already done it. And I preſume you are ſatisfied by this Time you did well and wiſely in it.

Anchith. I have owned it to you formerly, and have much more Reaſon to do it now, that I have had more Experience of the valuable Bleſſing, of ſo uſeful a Help, at ſuch a Time as this. Which is a Benefit I owe to you *Theophilus*. And I return you hearty Thanks for having firſt put me upon it.

Theoph. I was fully ſatisfied of the ſingular Uſefulneſs of ſuch a Guide, when you came within Sight of Eternity, and of ſuch an Interceſſor for you to Heaven, who being of God's own Appointment, is therefore the fitteſt Perſon to offer up your Requeſts for you, and to aſſiſt you in the other Offices of Religion. Such a Spiritual Phyſician is therefore to be applied to, and not only deſired once or twice for Form-ſake, but ſo as that he may perform the ſeveral Parts of his Office, conſtantly during the Perſon's Sickneſs. This is one conſiderable Branch of his Function; and would prove of admirable Uſe, if duly put in Execution.

Euſeb. And ſo it certainly would be, if the Generality of Mankind were but as wiſe as they ought to be.

Theoph. It is a diſmal Conſideration, to think how great a Part, I ſay, not of Mankind, but even of them that call themſelves Chriſtians, and have paſſed all their Days in this our truly excellent, Primitive, Apoſtolical Church, live at ſuch a Rate, that they ſeem to have little more than the Name of Chriſtians, to diſtinguiſh them from *Jews, Mahometans,*

tans, or *Heathens*. I have heard *Theodorus* and other Divines make sad Complaint, with great Grief and Sorrow of Heart, that when they go to assist their sick Neighbours in their Necessity, they find them frequently so intolerably Stupid, and Senseless as to the Business of Religion, that it evidently appears to have been none of their Care, and little Good is to be done with them. Many Times they are not sent to at all. And when they are, it is too often to very little Purpose, considering what Sort of Persons they have to deal with. The Man they are to visit desires to partake of their Prayers. He looks upon himself as taking his Leave of this World, and begs they will beseech Almighty God, to grant him a happy Passage into a better. But as to the Conditions required on his own Part, and without which there is no Hope of Salvation, he is a great Stranger to them. If he be asked what Grounds he has to hope that God is reconciled to him, and has forgiven his Sins; his Answer is, That he has lived quietly and peaceably, has wronged none of his Neighbours, and so he hopes well of himself. But ask him to give an Account of his Faith, and he does it very lamely. He has lived always in the Bosom of the Church, and commonly has made a Part of the publick Congregation; but not having been taught his Catechism when he was young, nor having accustomed himself to read the Scriptures, and other good Books since; he is almost as little versed in the Principles of Christianity, as if he had been bred up amongst the Savage *Indians*, or in the Deserts of *Arabia*. This is a dreadful Case, and such a Discouragement to a faithful Pastor, as one would scarce imagine possible in a Chri-

ſtian Country, and where the free Uſe of the Goſpel is allowed, and the Reading of it encouraged, and its Doctrines continually explained and inculcated, as they are with us. Yet I am well aſſured it is too true, and too common.

Euſeb. This is a ſad Story, if it happen but now and then.

Theoph. I doubt if you enquire of them who have had occaſion to know it beſt, you will find it no ſuch Rarity as you may imagine. And then if you enquire into his Practice, he hopes well of it; but alas! He is as deficient here too. He was bred up with a Profeſſion of Religion, and has avoided ſome of the more heinous Sins, ſuch as Robbery, Adultery, Murder, or ſolemn Perjury, which he has never been guilty of, though perhaps he has made no Conſcience of Swearing in his ordinary Converſation, in direct Oppoſition to our Saviour's Prohibition, *Swear not at all.* Nor is notorious for Drunkenneſs, or Lying, or Cheating, though poſſibly far from being innocent in any of theſe Reſpects. As for the Worſhip of God in his Family, he is as perfect a Stranger to it as can be, having never prayed with them Morning or Evening ſince he had them to pray with, and poſſibly but rarely by himſelf; nor perhaps has he ſo much as uſed himſelf to beg God's Bleſſing upon his Meals, or returned Thanks for them. He has taken no Care of his Children *to bring them up in the Nourture and Admonition of the Lord.* He minded indeed to get what Wealth he could for them, and to ſettle them in the World to the beſt Advantage, but as to their everlaſting Welfare, he has had as little Regard for that as for his own; which he ſeldom, if ever, ſeriouſly

5. Matt. 5. 34.

ouſly thought of. He went on careleſly, and did as he ſaw others do, but never troubled himſelf to enquire, whither the Path he was in would lead him, and whether the End of it would not be Death and everlaſting Deſtruction.

Euſeb. This is a woful Proof of the great Need ſuch have of all the Aſſiſtance that may be, to reſcue them if poſſible from thoſe intolerable Tortures they have been ſo long preparing for themſelves.

Theoph. It is a melancholick Employment to viſit ſuch thoughtleſs Sinners, both becauſe of the dreadful Condition they are in at preſent, and becauſe likewiſe of the little Impreſſion is like to be made upon them, by all the beſt Advice that can be given them, the moſt urgent and preſſing Exhortations that can be uſed, and all the moſt amazing Terrours that can be repreſented to them, or the moſt bleſſed Hopes that can be ſet before them.

Anchith. Can they poſſibly forbear conſidering at ſuch a Time as this?

Theoph. It is too Evident they can. Either they care not to hear of the Danger they are in; or if they give it a patient Hearing, they hope God is merciful and will pardon their Sins; they meant no Harm, and they truſt he will therefore be favourable to them: They are ſorry they have offended him, and wiſh they had done otherwiſe, and perhaps make ſome faint Promiſes of being wiſer for the Future, if it may pleaſe God to reſtore them to their Health. But as for any real Signs of a true and hearty Repentance, theſe are rarely to be met with amongſt ſuch.

Euseb. This is a lamentable Case. But yet since, if they will ever be brought to consider, they will do it upon a near Prospect of Death; and finde it is found by Experience, that some few are then so awakened out of their former Lethargy, as thenceforward really to become *new Men*; it is very fit they should have the Means used, to try what the Effect will be.

Theoph. And those who are duly mindful of their Flocks, will not refuse to do the utmost in their Power for reclaiming such; though it is easy to imagine, what a Mortification it must be to them, to observe the Difficulty of their Undertaking, and the little Hope they have of Success in it. This is a great Discouragement to a good Man; but will not deter him from performing his Duty to them, whatsoever the Event be. And it is a wonderful Comfort to him, if at any Time he be so happy as to awaken either a stupid, or a hardened Sinner into a Sense of his Duty; to be truly humbled for his Guilt, and earnestly desirous, not only of Pardon for it, but of Ability to *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.*

Euseb. Hence we see, what Reason there is to try if any Good can be done upon the worst of Men; who we may be sure will hearken now, if ever.

Theoph. And this confirms what I said, that the Minister ought to have Notice when any in his Parish are sick, that so he may attend them, and do what Service he can for them. But not only these, but the holiest and best of Christians will acknowledge the great Benefit of his Assistance, of which they are so sensible, that they seldom need to be put in Mind of sending to him, and are rejoiced at the Sight

of

of him when coming to minister to them, and are always highly thankful to him for it. This therefore is our Church's first Direction to the Sick, that *Notice be given to the Minister of the Parish* of his Sickness.

2. *To see that his Temporal Concerns be duly settled.*

In the *Second* Place, Enquiry is to be made, whether the Sick-Man has settled his Temporal Affairs, and he is to be exhorted to make his Will immediately, if it be not already done.

Euseb. A very proper Exhortation upon divers Accounts.

Theoph. Most certainly. But not in relation to *Anchithanes*, who, to my certain Knowledge, has made his some Days since: It had been better to have done it sooner; but being done, there is no Occasion to press it now.

Anchith. *Theodorus*, good Man, when he was first so kind as to give me a Visit, told me, he was commanded to enquire what Care I had taken, as to the Disposal of my Temporal Concerns, and was so urgent with me to make no longer Delay, lest haply I might die intestate, and bring great Mischief by it to my Family and Relations, that I forthwith sent for an Attorney, and dispatched that Affair, as *Theophilus* has declared.

Theoph. It were greatly to be wished, that all who have any Estates to leave behind them, would be perswaded never to be without a Will, and ever and anon to overlook it, and see what Occasion there may be for any Alterations in it. I have heard of some that have renewed their Will annually; and I cannot but think it very prudent in such as have great Dealings in the World to do it. And all others ought to amend what they shall think Defective

ctive in it, upon every conſiderable Alteration in their Circumſtances.

Euſeb. This undoubtedly were very adviſeable, if Men would be prevailed with to hearken to it. But alas! The Generality are ſo far from thus repeating their Will, they will not be got to make it at all, till they find themſelves at the Point of Death; and it is well if they can be invited to do it then.

Theoph. They can no more endure to think of making their Wills, than of ſetting about their Repentance. And hence it too often comes to paſs, that though they acknowledge both neceſſary, and promiſe and ſeem reſolv'd to do both before they die, they are both put off till it is too late, and ſo are never done at all. It is highly reaſonable therefore, that this ſhould be one Part of the Sick-Man's Examination, to the end that if he have hitherto neglected either of theſe Duties, he may be perſwaded to apply himſelf to it with all the Speed that may be.

Euſeb. It were much rather to be deſired that Perſons would take Care of both, in the Time of their Health and Strength, when they are better qualified for the Performance of them. But ſince the moſt Part will not be brought to this by any Conſideration whatſoever, they have the more Need to be put in Mind of it when they come to die.

3. *To examine the Sincerity of his Repentance.*

Theoph. And thus we are already fallen upon the next Part of the Prieſt's Office in Viſiting the Sick; which is, to examine them concerning the Sincerity of their Repentance, and their Forgiveneſs of all that have injur'd them, and their Deſire of Pardon from whomſoever they have offended, and their Readi-

neſs

neſs to make Reſtitution to any they may have wronged.

Euſeb. Till a Man is thus diſpos'd, there is no Hope left for him. And there is therefore all the Reaſon in the World, that this ſhould not only be propounded to him, but if he be found Negligent in this Reſpect, he ſhould be preſs'd with all the Vehemence and Earneſtneſs that may be, to make the beſt Amendment his preſent unhappy Circumſtances will admit of.

Theoph. This is the laſt Remedy he has left; and if he will not be perſwaded to make uſe of this, nothing farther remains for him but Deſpair and Miſery. Which ought to excite him to leave no Method unattempted, whereby he can any Way hope to retrieve himſelf out of this wretched Condition, and to try, by all Means that can be thought of, whether it be yet poſſible to obtain the Favour of God, and a well grounded Hope of Salvation. But conſidering *Anchithanes*'s Manner of Life, and his uſual Care to pleaſe God, and prepare for his latter End, I ſhall not inſiſt any farther upon this. I proceed rather to another Part of the Miniſter's Office in his Commerce with the Sick-Man, which is, *Fourthly*, to put him in Mind of making *a ſpecial Confeſſion of his Sins, if he find his Conſcience troubled with any weighty Matter*, and then proceed with him as he finds him a true Penitent, or not. But this, together with the Adminiſtration of the holy Sacrament, and the Abſolution upon your *earneſt Deſire* of it, having been all perform'd by *Theodorus*, I paſs over theſe too.

4. *To make Confeſſion of his Sins.*

Euſeb.

Euseb. If I mistake not, *the Minister is earnestly to move such sick Persons, as are of Ability, to be liberal to the Poor.*

Theoph. You are not mistaken. This is to be made a *Fifth* Part of the Sick-Man's Care, if he have not done it before, as *Antisthanes* had done plentifully in his Health; when what he gave was a much better Charity than it would have been at this Time. Besides that, now by Way of Addition to his former Benefactions, he has left a considerable Sum to that Purpose, in his Will. So that neither is there Occasion of recommending this Duty to him.

5. *To remember the Poor.*

Euseb. I trust Almighty God will give him an abundant *Recompence at the Resurrection of the Just.* But what is the next Duty you would mention?

Theoph. A quiet, patient Deportment under his Distemper, is a *Sixth* Duty, necessarily incumbent upon the Sick-Man, and which he is to take a particular Care of. A Duty which (so far as it respects Almighty God, and the Obedience that is due to his most holy Will, and accordingly is to be put in Practice at all Times, whenever under any Pressure of Calamity) has been already so largely recommended at a former Visit, that I need say no more of it. Wherefore I shall only observe here, that he is to be patient and easy as to those who are about him, to assist him in his Sickness. He is not only to take Care that he be not, like *Jonas*, angry at Almighty God, for his Hand over him; but neither may he be peevish and fretful to those who are doing good Offices for him; which were an ill Requital for all the Benefit he receives by their Means. This Sort of Carriage, I grant, is not

6. *To bear his Sickness with Patience and Submission.*

Jon. 4. 9.

not readily avoided, when a Man is tortur'd with exceſſive Pain, or Heat, or Thirſt, ſo that he knows not which Way to turn himſelf, to be at Reſt. But yet a good Chriſtian will watch againſt it; that he do not return Diſobligations, and Affronts, for the kind Aſſiſtance they afford him.

Anchith. This Caution comes ſeaſonably to me, who am too apt to be provok'd at every little Occurrence, and I know not how to help it. I do not encourage my ſelf in it; and I never us'd to be ſo before; which makes me hope it is the Effect of my Diſeaſe, and will be forgiven me upon that Account. But however, I do endeavour to prevent it as far as I am able.

Theoph. And ſo you ought. For Meekneſs, and Patience, are Virtues of no ſmall Account in the Chriſtian Religion. And Sickneſs is a moſt proper Time for the Exerciſe of them, ſo far as the Man can recollect his Thoughts, and govern himſelf. And though he cannot then command himſelf as at other Times, and ſo is more eaſily tranſported beyond his Bounds; yet is the due Government of his Paſſions ſo much the more commendable, by how much the more he finds himſelf inclined to give Way to them.

Euſeb. Theſe are ſome of thoſe Duties which concern the Sick-Man as ſuch, and are to be attended to accordingly, by all that would make a right Uſe of their Sickneſs, to God's Glory, and their own everlaſting Advantage. But by the Diſcourſe we had by the Way, it ſeem'd to me *Theophilus*, there are ſeveral other Duties, to be practiſed upon this Occaſion, and which the Sick-Man ought to employ

employ himſelf about, as eſpecially Preparatory for Death and Eternity.

Theoph. There are ſeveral others, beſide theſe hitherto mention'd, that each one ought to be exercis'd in, whenever it is his Lot to languiſh upon a Sick-bed, and be in Expectation of Death. The chief of which I ſhall now recite, as the Time, and *Anchithanes*'s Strength and Patience will give me Leave.

A ſerious Conſideration of Death.

I. The firſt is, *a ſerious Conſideration of Death.* That the Sick-Man bethink himſelf in a ſolemn Manner, what it is to die, and paſs into the other World.

Whether as a Separation of the Soul and Body.

Euſeb. 1. Death is no leſs than a total Separation of the Soul and Body, and ſo a Diſſolution of our natural Frame and Conſtitution. And it will concern every one to provide for this, that he may be able to bear up againſt all the Terrors of it with Courage and Magnanimity, and not be overwhelm'd with Sorrows upon every Appearance of it.

Theoph. You quite miſtake me, *Euſebius*; for I do not mean what I ſpeak of Death, in relation to it as ſuch a Quitting this earthly Tabernacle, which is a Matter of no ſuch great Concernment. For though theſe two old Aſſociates having, perhaps for Threeſcore or Fourſcore Years ſucceſſively, ſo conſtantly attended each other, as never to have been parted one Minute; the Apprehenſion of ſuch Parting may ſeem terrible beforehand, and put the Man into a Perplexity at the Thought of it; yet, if rightly conſider'd, there is no juſt Cauſe of being diſmay'd at it. Becauſe though it muſt be own'd, the Body hereby becomes only a ſenſeleſs, uſeleſs Lump of cold Clay, and afterwards the Food of Worms, the Soul, which

which is by far the principal Part, ſtill retains its Vivacity. This dies not, but is immediately tranſlated into another State, where it not only remains alive, but ſhall do ſo to the Time of Judgment. And when that Great Day comes, its former Companion, the Body, ſhall be rais'd, and reunited to it, that ſo they may continue together to all Eternity. So that whatſoever Damage there is in their preſent Separation, it will be abundantly compenſated at the Reſurrection, when they ſhall meet again, and be conjoin'd to each other, with ſuch an intimate Union, as will ſecure them from all Fear of ever dying again. In ſhort, if the Disjunction of the Soul and Body puts an End to this ſhort Life, the Reſurrection, which is neceſſarily to follow in its due Time, will bring them together again, never to be parted more. And this, methinks, ſhould baniſh all the Trouble, that might otherwiſe ariſe from the Thoughts of Death, conſider'd under this Notion, namely, that it is only the Body, the groſſer and leſs valuable Part that dies, and that too but for a little Time, after which, both Soul and Body ſhall be reſtor'd to each other, and enjoy one another with all the Security that can be deſir'd, or imagin'd, of ſuch a perpetual Union, as ſhall never be diſſolv'd. Nor is this all, but the Body ſhall ariſe of a pure, refined, and ſpiritual Nature, and by this Means incomparably fitter for the Soul's Operations, than ever it had been. *This Corruptible ſhall put on Incorruption, and this Mortal Immortality, and Death ſhall be ſwalled up in Victory*, ſo as never to make a ſecond Attempt upon them. And can any one think it hard to put off this earthly Cloathing for a while, to receive it again with infinite Improvement; 1 Cor. 15. 54.

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to lay aſide this leſs uſeful Inſtrument of the Soul, that he may have it at length reſtored in far greater Perfection, purged from all its Corruption, healed of all its Weakneſſes, and ſecured againſt Mortality, and all thoſe Diſeaſes which are ſo many natural, and all thoſe unhappy Accidents which are ſo many foreign Cauſes of it. This muſt be a bleſſed Change, for a corruptible, periſhing, mortal Body, ſubject to Sickneſſes and Pains, and a thouſand Sorts of Deaths, to be made glorious and immortal, and ſet above the Power of the many Misfortunes whereto it is liable here. The Soul alſo ſhall be wonderfully improv'd; its Capacity ſhall be enlarged, ſo that *though we ſee now through a Glaſs darkly, yet then Face to Face; though now we know in Part, then we ſhall know* more throughly, *even as alſo we are known.* The Conſideration whereof, if rightly attended to, will neceſſarily be a powerful Antidote againſt thoſe Fears and Diſturbances, whereto People ordinarily find themſelves ſubject upon this Account. And for this Reaſon it was, that I told you I did not ſpeak of Death, as a Diſſolution of the vital Union, that is betwixt the Soul and the Body, becauſe not of any ſuch ill Conſequence, as that a Man needs to be greatly concern'd about it.

1 Cor. 13. 12.

Euſeb. 2. You cannot mean it, I am confident, as to the Pains of Death; becauſe though theſe are many Times very ſharp, they are of no long Continuance, and uſually the ſhorter, when they are the ſharper. It is a melancholick Sight to behold a dying Man, confin'd to a ſtill and darkened Room, ſtored with Pots and Vials, with his Relations and Friends about him, conſulting his Phyſicians, and

Or *as to the Pains of it.*

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and endeavouring by all Means poſſible to prolong a miſerable Life, though it be but for a few Hours; to ſee him lying in this uncomfortable Condition, panting for Breath, ſighing and groaning, and making the moſt doleful Complaints of the Agonies he feels in himſelf, too great for weak Mortality to conflict with, and which muſt inevitably wear him out in a very little Time. You cannot be ſuppoſed, I ſay, to mean this, when you adviſe to be thinking of Death; becauſe all this Treatment, how painful ſoever to the Patient, and howſoever ſhocking to others, is but of very ſhort Duration, and will ſoon be intirely over.

Theoph. I do as little mean this. For this, though the more common, is not the only Way of leaving the World. Some are ſnatched away by outward Accidents; ſome by *Palſyes*, Apoplexies, Convulſions, Lethargies, and other latent Diſtempers that diſpatch them in a Moment. Some have been overcharg'd with an Exceſs of Meat or Drink, or of ſudden Joy or Grief. And ſome again are worn out by Age, and a gentle Decay, and give up the Ghoſt without ſo much as a Sigh or a Groan. And when Death appears with its moſt frightful Countenance, and armed with its greateſt Terrors, as to the Manner of it, though it be very affecting for the preſent, all this is of ſo little Continuance, and will be over in ſo ſhort a Space, as not to be of any Conſideration, in Compariſon of what is to follow afterwards.

Euſeb. 3. There is another Proſpect of Death, that is terrible to moſt Men, and which needs to be provided againſt; and that is with reſpect to the Loſs that comes by it. For it is

Or as it is a Quitting all worldly Enjoyments.

no leſs than an eternal Deprivation of all the good Things of this Life, which Mankind are ſo inſatiably enamour'd of, and in Purſuit whereof they uſually ſpend all their Days. And moſt Men will think it very hard, to be cut off in the midſt of their Hopes, when perhaps they have almoſt arriv'd at the Top of their Deſires; to be ſtripped of all, and laid as naked in the Earth, as if they had never been Owners of any Thing. *Be not afraid*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *though one be made rich, or the Glory of his Houſe be increas'd; he ſhall carry nothing away with him when he dieth, neither ſhall his Pomp follow him. While he lived, he counted himſelf a happy Man.* But *he ſhall certainly follow the Generation of his Fathers*, ſhall deſcend to the ſame Place of Death, the dark and ſilent Grave, whither they are gone before him, *and ſhall never ſee Light.* How proſperous ſoever his Circumſtances are, when once Death calls for him, there is no withſtanding ſuch a Summons, but immediately he muſt forſake them all, and *go to his long Home.*

Pſal. 49. 16, 17, 18, 19.

Eccleſ. 12. 5.

Theoph. All this is very true. When Death comes, every one muſt leave his Riches, his Honours, his Pleaſures, his Friends and Relations, and whatſoever is deareſt to him in this World. All which are highly Charming to the earthly-minded Man, and it ſtrikes him to the Heart to think of parting with them. And Oh that he could but have them any Way ſecured to him as long as he ſhall have a Being! He would then deſire no better Portion; nor would he be prevail'd upon to reſign his Intereſt in them, for all the moſt ineſtimable, unconceivable, immortal Glory, and Bliſs and Felicity of the other State. Yet after all,

* they

*they are of ſo ſhort and uncertain a Tenure, and liable to ſuch Variety of Caſualties, and Loſſes, and Frauds, and Violences; and at beſt are unſerviceable to ſo many of the Purpoſes of Life, that a wiſe Man would never ſuffer himſelf to be over-fond of them. But then, if we call to Mind how extreamly dangerous and deſtructive they are, that *ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon*, that **if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him*, that †*the Love of Money is the Root of all Evil*, there being as the Orator ſpeaks, ‖*Nullum Officium tam ſanctum atq; ſolenne, quod non Avaritia comminuere atq; violare ſoleat*, no Duty ſo ſacred and ſolemn, as that Covetouſneſs will not impair and violate it; I ſay, if this be taken into the Account, the Conſideration thereof may well abate our unreaſonable Affection for any Thing of this Nature, and put us upon another Sort of Thoughts and Deſigns. And indeed to reflect how flitting and uncertain, and again, how uſeleſs and unſatisfactory all ſublunary Enjoyments are, ſhould certainly raiſe up our Minds to the Joys that are above, and ſhould teach us to *look not at theſe* temporal good *Things which are ſeen, but at thoſe which* are infinitely better and more deſirable, that are *not ſeen, and are eternal*. And were but our Hearts once throughly ſet upon

St. Mat 6. 24.
*1 St. Joh. 2. 15.
† 1 Tim. 6. 10.
2 Cor. 4. 18.

* Οὐ γὰρ μετὰ τὸν ἀνθρώπου πλοῦτον πολλάκις, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πλοῦτου· καὶ ἴστε ὑμεῖς μυρία ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης ὑποδείγματα τῆς τελευτησάσης τὸν ἀφνὸν πλοῦτον, καὶ μιμνῄσκεσθε, ὅτι ὁ μὲν κεκτημένος ζῇ, τὸ δὲ κτῆμα ἀπόλετο. B. Chryſoſt. To. 5. Serm. 19. in Pſal. 48.

‖ Cic. pro Quintio. N. 13.

theſe, we ſhould ſoon find it no difficult Task, to deſpiſe all this Life's tranſitory, imperfect Satisfactions and Enjoyments, in Compariſon of thoſe greater and more durable, and conſequently far more valuable Treaſures. This would make us even long to be at Home, at our Father's Houſe, to dwell in thoſe bleſſed Manſions which he has prepared for his beloved, to partake of that *Fulneſs of Joy which is in his Preſence*, and thoſe moſt tranſporting *Pleaſures*, which are *at his Right Hand for evermore*. Such is the vaſt Difference, that is betwixt all the moſt entricing Allurements of this World, and the unconceivable Felicity of the other, that he who ſeriouſly attends to it, will find no more Difficulty in reſigning all here, to enter upon that far better State, than in parting with a poor homely Cottage, amongſt the meaneſt of the People, to take Poſſeſſion of a plentiful Fortune, a ſtately Palace, and an honourable Authority and Juriſdiction. So far would he be from grieving at his Change. It is related of * *Cleombrotus*, and † *Gorgias*, and ‖ *Cato*, and divers others amongſt the Heathens, that were ſo weary of this World, and had ſuch a longing and eager Deſire after the Rewards they promis'd themſelves in the other, that they were not only reconcil'd to Death, but were fond of it, and ſet themſelves to haſten it, as if it would not

Pſal. 16. 11.

* B. Aug. de Civ. Dei. l. 1. c. 22. & Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. l. 1. c. 34.

† Cic. de Conſolat.

‖ Lactant. Inſtit. l. 3. c. 18. & Ælian. Var. Hiſt. l. 13. c. 20. Varen. de Religione in Regnis Japon. c. 1. Le Sieur Jovet. Hiſt. des Religions, To. 3. p. 183, 184, 185.

otherwiſe have ſeiz'd them Time enough. And what an intolerable Shame is it for Chriſtians, who have far nobler Rewards in view, than theſe could ever dream of, to be in Bondage to what theſe were ſo much Maſters of? And above all Times is ſuch a Dotage on the World moſt inexcuſable, when a Man is convinc'd, that in all Probability he is entring upon another Life, wherein he can neither have Occaſion for, nor receive any Benefit from, what he is ſo loth to leave. This argues his Chriſtianity to have but little Influence upon him, ſince otherwiſe he could not poſſibly be ſo Regardleſs, either of the Glories it offers in a future State, or of the ſtrict Obligations it lays upon all its Profeſſors, to beware of being enſlaved to any Thing here below.

Euſeb. 4. Death may be conſider'd as a Deliverance from this frail Life, and the numerous Calamities, and Misfortunes of divers Kinds, that ſo conſtantly attend it. *Man is born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upwards.* They are natural to him during his Paſſage through this World, and he can no more hope to eſcape them, than to live without breathing. As we are all, even the moſt miſerable of us, made Partakers of innumerable undeſerved Bleſſings; ſo on the other Hand, thoſe who are in the moſt advantageous Circumſtances have nevertheleſs their different Sorts of Croſſes and Vexations, to conteſt with. * And that Death puts an End to theſe, can be no Misfortune; nor need the Thoughts of ſuch a

Or as a Deliverance from the Troubles and Misfortunes of this Life.

* Moriar? hoc dicis, deſinam ægrotare poſſe, deſinam alligari poſſe, deſinam mori poſſe. Senec. Epiſt. 24.

bleſſed Change, to break any one's Reſt beforehand. Wherefore I cannot ſuppoſe this to be what you mean, when you call upon the Sick-man to conſider, what it is to die.

Theoph. You may be ſure it is not. * For who would ever dread to be delivered from all his Infirmities, Loſſes, Cares, Wrongs, Affronts, or whatever Kind of Troubles? This were to be eſteem'd a ſingular Happineſs; and ſo far from adminiſtring juſt Cauſe of Complaint or Diſſatisfaction, that a Man ought in all Reaſon to conclude himſelf not a Loſer, but a Gainer; not ruin'd, but ſav'd by it. But there is ſtill another Notion of Death you have not yet touched upon.

Or as it is a Paſſage to Eternity.

Euſeb. 5. There is ſo, that it is the Door to an eternal State. And what a Remedy is this againſt all the Fears of Death, to think that when we come into the other World, we ſhall be ſure never to die more, but live to eternal Ages? O Eternity! Eternity! What an immenſe Addition is ſuch a boundleſs Duration to any Sort of Happineſs? But what an Exceſs of Happineſs muſt it be to live in Peace, and Reſt, and Joy, and neither hunger, nor thirſt, nor meet with any Croſs Accidents, or ill Uſage, nor be ſick, nor grow old, nor die, through a long Eternity? This is ſuch a bleſſed and laſting Duration, that our preſent, tranſitory and troubleſome Life, bears no Manner of Proportion to it, and

* Εἰ ὅτω πάλαι εἰμὶ, λιμὸν τὸ ἀποθανεῖν· ὅτι δ' ἐστὶν ὁ λιμὸν πάντων θάνατος. Arr. Epictet. l. 4. c. 10. Εἰ δ' ἀπεῖσι μηδὲν εἶναι μετὰ θάνατον, ἀλλ' εἰς ἀναισθησίαν χωρεῖν τὰς ἀποθνήσκοντας ἀποφαίνονται, πολλῶν ἐντεῦθεν ῥυόμενοι ἡμᾶς διεγνώκασι. Just. Mart. Apol. 2.

therefore

therefore ought by no Means to be ſet in Competition with it.

Theoph. Moſt certainly it ought not, though there had been no more in the Caſe, than that the Life we enter upon at Death, and which we are henceforward to lead in the other World, is of a perpetual, eternal Continuance, and ſhall never draw towards an End. But that which is each one's chief Concern, and calls for his utmoſt Care and Diligence, and which to this End I now recommend to your Conſideration, is the Nature of the Shore whereon we ſhall be landed in that eternal World. * Our Bodies at Death univerſally return to the Earth, from whence they had their firſt Extraction. But our Souls paſs immediately into another Life, either of Happineſs or Miſery, leſs perfect in the mean Time, but which will be fully compleated at the Reſurrection, and the general Judgment of all Mankind. At which Time our bleſſed Lord, who is to be our Judge, acquaints us beforehand, that ſome ſhall be ſet on the Right Hand, and the reſt on the Left, and that a very different Sentence ſhall be paſs'd upon them, to the unſpeakable Comfort and Happineſs of the former, and the inevitable, intolerable, irreparable Deſtruction of the latter. *When the Son of Man ſhall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his Glory. And before him ſhall be gather'd all Nations, and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a Shepherd* St. Mat. 25. 31, 32, 33, 34.

* Mortalitas iſta, ut Judæis & Gentilibus, & Chriſti hoſtibus peſtis eſt, ita Dei ſervis ſalutaris exceſſus eſt, *B. Cypr. de Mortalit.* Miſeriarum omnium, quas viventes pertulimus, finis eſt in morte. *Cic.* de Conſolat.

divideth the Sheep from the Goats: And he ſhall ſet the Sheep on his right hand, but the Goats on the left. Then ſhall the King ſay to them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. And *ſhall ſay alſo unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels.* And accordingly, *Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment, but the Righteous into Life eternal.* So alſo the Apoſtle St. *Paul* aſſures the *Romans* in his Epiſtle to that Church, that God *will render to every Man according to his Deeds; To them, who by patient Continuance in well Doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life: But unto them that are contentious, and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh, upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil; of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentiles.* And in the Revelation of St. *John*, He, ſays the Apoſtle, *that overcometh, ſhall inherit all Things, and I will be his God, and he ſhall be my Son. But the Fearful, and Unbelieving, and the Abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Liars, ſhall have their Part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimſtone; which is the ſecond Death.* From which, and Multitudes of other Places in the New Teſtament, it is eaſy to obſerve, what Reaſon every one has, to be exceedingly ſolicitous, as to what ſhall become of him in the other Life. Seeing ſome ſhall be infinitely Happy and Glorious, and others no leſs Miſerable, and this to all Eternity; none, who has not his Underſtanding groſly ſtupified, can avoid believing it to be a Matter of the higheſt Importance to him poſſible, to have his Portion amongſt the former. For this

St. Mat. 25. 41.

Ver. 46.

Rom. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Rev. 21. 7, 8.

this therefore each one ſhould be providing all his Life long, as the only Way to ſave his Soul, and make himſelf for ever Happy. But when he comes to be confin'd to his Bed, and ſees his End at ſo near a Diſtance, that he can almoſt look forward into the other World, as *Moſes* did from Mount *Nebo* into the Land of *Canaan*, he will be naturally inclin'd, eagerly to deſire, and long to know, what will become of him in that other State. If he find that God is reconcil'd to him through Chriſt, and ſo he may look upon himſelf as intitled to the Heavenly Felicity, what a mighty Comfort muſt ſuch a Reflection be to him? How will he be tranſported, and almoſt overwhelmed with Joy, at ſo raviſhing a Diſcovery? And on the other Hand, if his Sins bear ſuch Witneſs againſt him, that he has no Hope to eſcape the Wrath to come, but finds himſelf even upon the Brink of Hell, and ready every Hour to drop into it, ſuch a doleful Proſpect, if he be capable of thinking at all, will be ſure to plague and torment him, and almoſt cauſe a Hell within him, whilſt he is not yet caſt into thoſe diſmal Flames. To loſe an eternal Enjoyment, of the perfecteſt and compleateſt Happineſs in all reſpects; to be undoubtedly aſſured, that there are ineſtimable Rewards to be diſtributed amongſt the faithful Followers of our Lord, immortal Diadems to be put upon their Heads, and Thrones, and Kingdoms to be allotted them, * *pro varietate Meritorum*, according to their ſeveral Qualifications and Services; to know for a Certainty that Heaven is a Place of incomparable Sa-

Deut. 34. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

* Tertull. Scorpiac. c. 6.

tisfaction

tisfaction and Delight, infinitely beyond what can be expreſs'd, or conceiv'd; and that the Righteous ſhall be everlaſtingly poſſeſs'd of it; and yet not only to come ſhort of this ſo vaſt a *Recompence of Reward*, but to meet with a Hell in lieu of it; to be caſt into an inſatiable Gulph, of exceſſive Anguiſh, and incurable Deſpair, to be lodg'd amongſt the Devils and damned Spirits, and to be tortur'd and plagu'd by them, with the utmoſt Spight and Malice, to lie yelling and roaring, toſſing and turning, in burning Streams of the hotteſt Sulphur, without Intermiſſion or Ceſſation; to meet with all theſe unconceivable Agonies, inſtead of enjoying an uninterrupted State of the perfecteſt Happineſs with the Saints above, is ſo ſad and doleful a Caſe, that no Words can expreſs, or Fancy imagine the Terror of it. And eſpecially if hereto be added the Duration of this woful State, that it is to laſt for evermore, and never, never, never to have an End, but after as many Thouſands of Years, as there are Drops of Water in the Ocean, Grains of Sand on the Shore, Spires of Graſs throughout the Earth, and Stars in the Firmament; after as many Myriads of Years, or even as many Millions of Ages, all this Miſery will be no nearer a Concluſion than at the firſt Beginning of it. Whom does not ſuch a Meditation preſently pierce to the Quick? It is a very afflicting Thought to a good Man, that this muſt be the everlaſtingly wretched State, of far the greater Part of Mankind. But to the Sinner, who deſervedly expects to be in a little Time irrecoverably plunged into all this Wo and Miſery, the Dread of it one would think were enough to bereave him of his Senſes, or perhaps to ſtrike him

him quite dead. At leaſt it muſt make ſuch an Impreſſion upon him, that if any Thing in the World can bring him to a ſerious Temper of Mind, and put him upon conſulting his Eſcape, from ſuch a Scene and Weight of Sorrows, this muſt do it. This Meditation alone, to one that apprehends himſelf already within a few Steps of ſo intolerably dolorous a Condition, ſhould be ſufficient to melt a Heart of Adamant, and diſſolve it into Floods of Tears. And thoſe Men muſt be moſt deſperately regardleſs of their own Safety, whom ſo awakening a Reflection will not put upon contriving by all Means poſſible to ſecure themſelves. And oh that the Sinner would therefore be perſwaded, to bethink himſelf, and grow wiſer, before it be too late! That he would make the beſt Uſe he can, of the few Hours he has remaining, to try if God can yet be prevail'd with, to extend his Mercy to him, upon a hearty and exemplary Repentance. Let him weigh well with himſelf, that when once the ſlender Thread of his Life is cut, it will be too late for him to think of obtaining a Pardon afterwards. For he muſt then be drag'd to his Trial with all his Sins about him, and thence to the Place of Execution, to be rack'd, and tortur'd, and tormented, till he ſhall have *paid the utmoſt Farthing*. Who can poſſibly foreſee this to be his own Condition, and forbear one Minute to ſummon together all his Force, and exert the utmoſt of his Power, to reſcue himſelf out of it with all the Speed that may be?

Anchith. A Senſe of ſuch exceſſive Danger, is the ſtrongeſt Motive that can be, to a ſerious Recollection, and a diligent Uſe of whatſoever

ſoever Means are neceſſary, in order to a Recovery out of it.

Euſeb. † *Mercury* in *Lucian* adviſes to meditate upon Death, and the little Diſtance it is off, as a ſingularly uſeful Means, for diſpoſing Perſons both to live ſoberly, and ſo die eaſily. And agreeably hereto †† *Seneca* profeſſes of himſelf, that he took Care to live in continual Expectation of that great Day, when Judgment ſhall paſs upon all his former Years; and found this happy Effect of ſuch his Practice, that he was above the Fear of Dying, whenever his Time ſhould come. And again he affirms, that || *None can hope to ſee that Time, with a chearful and compos'd Countenance; who has not taken Care to recontile himſelf to it before-hand*; and hence adviſes him, (a) *to be always mindful of it*. Much more ſhould Chriſtians lay to Heart the infinite Concern they have depending, upon their Fitneſs to die well, and as becomes thoſe who have an abundant Aſſurance, incomparably beyond what the reſt of the World had, of a future Immortality, with which nothing here below can bear to be ſet in Competition.

Theoph. And the nearer they draw to this endleſs State, the greater Reaſon they have, to be ruminating upon it, and upon that Death which is the only, and the certain Paſſage to it, and ſo to prepare themſelves for

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* Char. ſeu Contempl.

† Non timidè itaq; componor ad illum Diem, &c. Epiſt. 26.

|| Epiſt. 30.

(a) Tu tamen Mortem ut nunquam timeas, ſemper cogita. *Ibid.*

it,

it, as that it may happily convey them into eternal Glory. These Sort of Meditations justly challenge our frequent and serious Thoughts, and the sooner we fall upon them so much the better.

Euseb. Death, as it is a Passage to Eternity, is a Matter of that great Weight, that if it will not bring Men to their Wits, and make them serious and considerate, it is not to be hop'd that any Thing else should be able to do it. He that can stand out against such an awakening Shock, may justly be given over as desperate and incurable. He now sees our Saviour's Doctrine manifestly verified, that *if he could gain the whole World by the Loss of his Soul*, it would be an exceedingly dear Bargain, and what he would have Cause to lament for ever and ever. And it is very strange if Men can be so harden'd in their Sins, as to stand out against all these Terrors, and instead of husbanding the little Time they have left, to cast themselves willingly, and with their Eyes open, into the Pit of Destruction. St. Mat. 16. 26.

Theoph. You see then I had very good Reason, to recommend a sober and solemn Consideration of Death, as an effectual Course in order to a serious Preparation for it.

Anthith. You had so; nothing being a more powerful Incentive, to an earnest Desire and Endeavour to fit our selves for our latter End, than duly to bethink our selves of that everlasting State, either of incomparable Happiness, or inexpressible Tortures, wherein Death will most certainly lodge every one of us, me in all Appearance in the first Place, and you not long after.

A Prayer

A Prayer for a ſanctified Conſideration of Death.

ALmighty God, our heavenly Father, who giveſt us Life, and Breath, and all Things; and on whoſe infinite Goodneſs, and Mercy through Chriſt my Saviour, is all my Dependance, both for the preſent, and in order to a future State: Caſt an Eye of Pity upon me in this declining Condition; and give me Grace to make a due Improvement of it. Let no Terrors of Death, how near ſoever, prevail over me, and affright me out of my Hope in thee. And ſuffer me not on the other Hand vainly to preſume upon thy Goodneſs. Open mine Eyes, and awaken my ſluggiſh Soul, that ſeeing how little Time I am to expect in this World, my Heart, my Thoughts, and all my Deſires, may be ſet upon another; and my whole Buſineſs may be to ſecure to my ſelf an Intereſt therein. Give me ſuch a comfortable, and well-grounded Aſſurance of another Life, with thee in Heaven, as may protect me from all thoſe Fears of Death, to which I might otherwiſe be in Bondage. I am ſenſible, that Death is not only a Departure hence, but a Tranſlation into another eternal World, where I muſt live for ever, either with thee and my bleſſed Saviour in endleſs Glory, or with the Devil and his Angels in the bottomleſs Abyſs of Miſery. And accordingly I do moſt earneſtly beg, that the Reſult of theſe moſt weighty Meditations, may be a Care, ſtill more and more to mortify all my worldly and carnal Inclinations, and to make the beſt Uſe that may be of the ſhort Remainder of my Time, that ſo I may be in a Readineſs to quit my Station, whenſoever thou ſhalt call for me. To this End teach me ſo to number my Days, that I may apply my Heart to the only

true and saving Wisdom, that being fully convinc'd how frail a Creature Man is, and how near I in particular seem at this Time to be to my great Change, I may give all Diligence to perfect my Preparation for it, that so the longer I continue here, the better I may approve my self to thee, and the nearer I come to my latter End, the fitter I may be for it, and for the Fruition of thy self in everlasting Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Another for Deliverance from everlasting Death.

PReserve me, O Lord, and strengthen me against all this World's Temptations; and of thy great Mercy save me from the Wrath to come. Be with me now, and at the Hour of Death, and let no Evil hurt me. Thou knowest, Lord, the Secrets of all Hearts, shut not thy merciful Ears to my Prayers. But spare me, O Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer me not to miscarry at my last Hour; but save me from the bitter Pains of eternal Death, that whatever becomes of me in the mean Time, I may by no Means be irrecoverably miserable in a future State. Amen.

Another

Another for a happy Eternity.

LOrd, whilst I live, enable me to live to thee, that when I die, I may die in thy Favour, and whether in Life, or Death, I may be thine, and after Death may live and rejoice in thee, and may bless, and praise, and glorify thy Holy Name through an endless Eternity. Grant this, O blessed God, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen.

A Care to wean our selves from the World.

Theoph. II. Another Duty I would recommend, as necessarily incumbent upon the Sick-Man, is *to wean himself from the World.* I have already observed the Insufficiency of all earthly Possessions, and Advantages, and by Consequence the great Reason we all have to labour after such an Indifferency towards them, as that they may never be able to weigh down our Souls, and keep them from aspiring after a far more desireable Reward in the highest Heavens. And indeed * till we have got this Conquest over our selves, it will be impossible to quit this present Life with a willing Mind, though at the call of God himself; because these earthly Objects will be so many dangerous Retractives, filling Men with Sorrow at the Thoughts of leaving them, and making them loth to depart thither, where they shall be sure to have no farther Enjoyment of them. He that has his Affections glued to the Earth, will not know how (if it could be allowed him) to mount up to Heaven, with any Satisfaction or Ease; but will recoil, and start

* Siquid mirabere, pones Invitus. *Horat.* l. 1. *Epist.* 10.

back,

back, and faint, and be in Agonies, and almoſt dead at the Apprehenſion of bidding farewel to them. And whilſt the Thought of ſuch a Removal is thus diſtaſtful to him, it is not to be imagined, that he can be reconciled to it. Nor ought he to look upon himſelf, as in a due Preparation for Death, till he has got his Soul at Liberty, from the Bondage it had been in to theſe vain Allurements. Which one would think were no hard Task, conſidering the many Croſſes and Diſappointments † which uſually accompany them; and that themſelves alſo are at beſt Deceitful and Unſatisfactory, and *all the Works that are done under the Sun, are but Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.* The dying Chriſtian has ſo much a nobler Purchaſe in his Eye, that his Deſires ſhould be carried forth intirely after that, and he ſhould be heartily aſhamed to take up with any Thing ſhort of it. Eſpecially ſeeing that had theſe earthly Enjoyments, of whatever Sort, been far more valuable than they are, they might be ſo to others, but can be no longer of any Uſe to him, who is upon his Entrance into another World. He may look back, and ſee what dangerous Temptations they have been to him; but all he has now to do with them, is only to take his Leave of them, and ſue to God for the Forgiveneſs of any paſt Abuſe of them, he has

Eccleſ. 1. 14.

† Siquis modo ſecum animo reputarit, quam calamitoſa ſit hæc noſtra omnis vita, quot periculis, quot morbis, quot caſibus, quot curis, quot incommodis, quot vitiis, quot injuriis ſit obnoxia, quàm exigua pars ejus nobis abeat, non dicam cum voluptate, ſed non aliquâ ægritudine contaminata, deinde quàm fugax etiam ac præceps, propemodum etiam gratulabitur iis, qui maturius eam reliquerint. *Eraſm.* Declamat. de Morte.

been guilty of. They are ſerviceable to a great Degree, in our Paſſage through this preſent Life; and if well improved in Acts of Mercy and Charity, will bring us to an ample Reward above in Heaven; but this is all the Benefit he can expect from them. We are only intruſted with them during our ſtay here, and muſt neceſſarily reſign them, whenever we lay aſide *this earthly Tabernacle*, there being no farther Uſe we can then make of them. They will contribute nothing to the wicked Man's Eaſe, when he comes to languiſh in ſuch Exceſs of Pain and Torment, in the burning Lake, as nothing in the World can mitigate. And thoſe in Heaven will have no Need of them; for they will be everlaſtingly poſſeſſed of vaſtly greater, and more durable Treaſures, and ſo will look down upon all this World's Glory, as not deſerving any Regard from them. And this Leſſon it is the Sick-Man's Part to teach himſelf beforehand, that when he ſhall be called hence, he may quite disburden himſelf of his heavy Clog, and may be perfectly at Liberty to obey, and be gone. And who can tell whether one great End of God's not cutting Men off immediately, but continuing them for ſome Time under their Sickneſs, may not be to work this good Effect upon them? He very well knows, what an inexcuſable Fondneſs the Generality of Mankind have for theſe Things, how intent they are upon getting them, how they torment themſelves with the Fear of loſing them, and again how ſorrowful they are at the Loſs of any Part of them; what an Occaſion they are of many Sorts of Wickedneſs; and how People will venture to be damned for them. And where he ſees any thus enſlaved to them, it is a great Mercy in him,

him, to allow them a little Time of Reſpite, wherein to reflect upon their Vanity and Emptineſs, to repent of the Sins whereinto they have at any Time been drawn by them, and to ſet himſelf free from them. And it is highly unreaſonable for ſuch an one, not to comply with all the Willingneſs that may be, with this ſo gracious a Deſign, ſo proper and ſeaſonable in it ſelf, and which may turn ſo highly to his own Advantage. And I muſt therefore beg Leave, to recommend to every one the Apoſtle St. *Paul*'s Advice, which he gave the *Corinthians*, ſo to get themſelves affected with a Senſe of the Shortneſs and Uncertainty of our Abode in this World, as not to be brought into Subjection to any Thing in it. *Now this I ſay, Brethren, the Time is ſhort. It remaineth that both they that have Wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not; and they that uſe this World, as not abuſing it: For the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away.* Seeing *we brought nothing into this World, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*, what unaccountable Folly is it, to ſet our Hearts upon what we muſt be ſure to leave, in a little Time, and the leaving whereof will by this Means become a ſore Vexation to us? 1 Cor. 7. 29,30,31. 1 Tim. 6. 7.

Euſeb. Nothing ſeems more naturally ſerviceable, to take our Minds off from theſe Things, than a Sick-Bed; both becauſe it ſhews the Man, that he is not like to be allowed any longer Enjoyment of them, and becauſe he now finds by ſad Experience, not only that they cannot prolong his declining Life, but likewiſe how little they can contri-

bute towards giving him any Eaſe from his Pains, or Recovery from his Sickneſs.

Theoph. It may be a Trouble to him to caſt his Eyes back, and ſee how much more agreeably he had lived formerly, than he does at preſent, though as yet poſſeſſed of as much of this World, as ever he had in his whole Life. But it is a Demonſtration of the Abſurdity of ſuffering his Affections to be ſtill fixed, upon what he is now fully convinced to his Coſt, will *not profit in the Day of Wrath*, * will never ſave the Owner from Death, nor give him Eaſe whilſt he draws towards it; and calls loudly upon him to recal his Thoughts, and place them upon thoſe more amiable Objects, which will be ſure never to fail or diſappoint him, if he can but once attain to them. Howſoever he might formerly have been deceived with Appearance inſtead of Reality, and taken theſe gawdy Vanities for ſolid and ſubſtantial Treaſures, it is full Time for him to change his Opinion of them, now that he finds them all to be but a feeble Support, and that they will leave him in a diſconſolate Condition, when he has moſt Need of their Help. Wherefore, ſince he can obtain no Relief by their Means, now that he is in unuſual Want of it, common Prudence would direct him, not to put a higher Value upon them than they deſerve, nor ever to trouble himſelf more, for what he ſees is thus vile and worthleſs.

Prov. 11. 4.

* Quæ nec felicitatem, nec quietem præſtare poſſunt, quæ cæcis ſuis amatoribus pollicentur. *Lud. Berus* de Præparat. ad Mortem, *cap.* 1.

Euſeb.

Euſeb. A late learned Prelate † gives a very diminitive Character of them, from the Wiſeman; who he tells us, ſums up their whole Value in theſe two Words, *Vanity* and *Vexation*. And then he asks a very rational Queſtion; *At what Price you would rate* Vanity, *which is nothing, or* Vexation, *which is worſe than nothing?*

Theoph. And well he might. For what Man, not intirely bereaved of his Senſes, would be perſwaded to love, and diſquiet himſelf for, what he is ſatisfied beforehand, he can never put any Truſt in?

Anchith. And ſo I remember * another devout and affecting Author, though I confeſs not of our Communion, tells us, *God ſows Gall and Wormwood in the Goods of this Life, that the Soul being afflicted, may repent, and turn to him.*

Theoph. And who would be enamoured of *Gall and Wormwood?* Are theſe ſuch irreſiſtible Temptations, that the Proſpect of Heaven and eternal Happineſs is not to be preferred before them? Away with ſuch Sottiſhneſs and Stupidity, and let us begin at length to grow wiſe, and truly *conſider our latter End.* Let us remember, we know not how ſpeedily we may be called hence, and then what Plenty ſoever of theſe Enjoyments had fallen to our Share, they will all be ſure to forſake us at the Grave, if they had not done it much ſooner. And let us ſhew our ſelves Men, by a ſlight Regard for them, that though we uſe them as we have Occaſion, we never dare to abuſe them, or our ſelves, upon their Account. Let us eſteem

† *Biſhop* Hopkyns's *Vanity of the World. p.* 105, 106.

* Euſeb. Nierembergh *of the Difference between the Temporal and the Eternal*, l. 3. c. 9.

of them according to their intrinsick Worth, not our own vain Imaginations. And let us be sure to employ them to the End for which they are committed to our Management, the Supply of our own and others Necessities. Let us also sit so loose to them all, that we may as easily lay them aside when we come to have no longer Need of them, as the Traveller does his thick and heavy Clothes in a hot Sun-shine Day, or his dirty ones at the End of his Journey. This is a Duty that all are obliged, as Christians, to be continually encreas'd in, nothing being more plainly required in Scripture, than *not to love the World, nor the Things of it.* But the Sick are to be particularly careful of it upon a twofold Account; First, because they know assuredly, if they do it not before they leave the World, they can never Hope to do it to any Advantage hereafter. And again, because, if they depart hence, enslaved to these vain Delusions, the Love and *Friendship of the World is* such *Enmity to God*, that they shall never obtain an Admission into his Glory. So that this is one necessary Branch, of that more immediate Preparation for Death, which every one is to take Care of, namely to wean our selves more and more from the World, and see that the less Time we apprehend our selves like to continue in it, the less Regard we have for it; that so we may be able to leave it, with the greater Indifferency for any Thing in it.

1 S. Joh. 2. 15.

A Prayer for Victory over the World, and the Attainment of God's gracious Promiſes.

I.

LOrd God Almighty, Infinite, and Eternal, all the whole Heavens are thine, and the Earth haſt thou given to the Children of Men. Bleſſed be thy holy Name, for that Portion of the good Things thereof, which thou haſt beſtowed upon me thy moſt unworthy Servant, that thou haſt not expoſed me to thoſe Wants and Difficulties, that many others, better than me, are forced to ſtruggle with, but haſt made my Life eaſy and comfortable to me. I am aſhamed, and do ſincerely humble my ſelf before thee for all mine Abuſes of this thine abundant Goodneſs to me; beſeeching thee, of thy great Mercy, to pardon theſe my Miſcarriages, and to give me Grace to make a right Improvement of all thy Gifts for the Future, if it ſhall be thy good Pleaſure to allow me Time for it. Or if thou haſt determined to remove me hence immediately, yet do not refuſe to wean my Heart firſt from theſe tranſitory Enjoyments, that they may no longer have any Dominion over me. Vouchſafe me a right Notion of them, that I may value them according to their true Worth; ſo as neither to be unthankful to thee my God for them, nor unwilling to reſign them, whenſoever thou ſhalt pleaſe to demand them, or to take me away from them. Work up my Soul to ſuch an Indifferency towards them, as that they may be no Hindrance to me, in the Proſecution of what is infinitely more deſirable. And raiſe up alſo my Affections to the Things above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right Hand of God, that my Heart may be fully ſet upon them;

and I may be able to deſpiſe all that this lower World contains, in Compariſon of them. This I beg for thy dearly beloved Son's ſake, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

II.

INcline my Soul, O Lord, to labour above all Things, after a perpetual Enjoyment of thee my greateſt Good, and an Attainment of thoſe everlaſting Rewards, which thou haſt prepared for thy faithful Diſciples, in the Kingdom of Heaven. And ſuffer not any ſublunary Advantages whatſoever, to preſs down my Deſires to the Earth, and earthly Things. Remind me of my moſt holy Profeſſion, and the Hope that is ſet before me, and what admirable Encouragement I have, not to lay up to my ſelf Treaſures here below, where Ruſt and Moth do corrupt, and Thieves break through and ſteal, but readily to overlook all Things of this Nature, in Reſpect to the infinite Glories of the other Life, whither my Saviour is gone before. To whom with thee, O Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory World without End. Amen.

III.

O God, who declareſt thy Almighty Power moſt chiefly in ſhewing Mercy and Pity; mercifully grant to me ſuch a Meaſure of thy Grace, that I running the Way of thy Commandments, may obtain thy gracious Promiſes, and be made Partaker of thy heavenly Treaſure, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

Perfecting our Repentance.

Theoph. III. Another Duty particularly incumbent upon the Sick-Man is, *To renew and perfect his Repentance*; to review his whole Life paſt, and bewail the Errors and Sins of it, to ſue for the Pardon of them, and unfeignedly and

and ſolemnly reſolve againſt them for the Future. It is an amazing Conſideration to think, how great a Part of Mankind have the whole Buſineſs of their Lives to begin, when they are at the Point of Death. They have ſinned away all their Working-Time, and perhaps not ſo much as once ſet about what they came into the World for; and now that they are almoſt quite paſt their Labour, they have it all yet to do. No Wonder if ſuch be ſtruck with Aſtoniſhment at the Sight of their own egregious Folly, when they come thus late to be convinced, into what dreadful Circumſtances they have brought themſelves. What Racks and Tortures muſt theſe feel within their own Breaſts, when they find * how great a Work lies upon their Hands, and how unfit they are for the Diſpatch of it, and yet how little Time they have before them, had they been better able to undertake it; and withal, that they are moſt aſſuredly undone, ruined and undone irrecoverably, and to all Eternity, except they can get it finiſh'd before they are taken hence. Some are ſo intolerably ſtupified by a long Courſe of Sin, as to have no Senſe of their Danger, when thus upon the Brink of irretrievable Perdition. But as for thoſe who have their Conſcience awakened by ſo diſmal a Proſpect, it is impoſſible to expreſs the Anguiſh, and Remorſe, wherewith they muſt inevitably be ſeized, the Stingings and Twinges they muſt inceſſantly feel within themſelves from the terrible Load of Guilt that lies ſo heavy upon them. Which whether they ſhall

* Ad tantum negotiorum agmen non ſufficit ille temporis articulus. *Eraſm.* de præparat. ad Mortem.

ever

ever get pardoned, after all they are able now to do in order to it, God only knows. But I am ſure they have all the Reaſon that may be, to beſtir themſelves with all their might, and make the beſt Improvement poſſible, of thoſe few Minutes that are yet behind.

Euſeb. That undoubtedly they have, and muſt be the moſt wretched Sots that ever were, the moſt ſenſeleſs Part of the whole Creation, if they leave any Thing undone, that can poſſibly be done, in order to a Recovery out of this doleful Condition, whereinto they have obſtinately brought themſelves. This every one knows to be true, though very few have the Senſe of it they ought to have.

Theoph. But theſe are not the Perſons with whom I am concerned at preſent, my Deſign now being to ſpeak to the Caſe of ſuch as had minded the Buſineſs of Religion in the Time of their Health, and are now to perform only what relates more immediately to their Sick-Bed. And even theſe are, as I ſaid, ſtill to renew and compleat their Repentance, to call themſelves to an Account for the Defects of their wonted Acts of Contrition, and to be grieved and aſhamed, that they had not been more perfect, and better anſwered the Deſign of their Profeſſion, and to endeavour to ſupply what was wanting in them. And they ſhould look upon it as a great Mercy to them, that God is pleaſed to allow them a Space to do this in, and moreover by the Weight of his Hand upon them, to excite them to take care of themſelves. And in Truth, conſidering the Frailty of humane Nature, and the many Failings and Defects, Neglects and Overſights, the beſt of Men are liable to in this Life, there are none but may ſee Reaſon enough to wiſh

for

for ſome Time, wherein to reflect upon, and as much as in them lies, to rectify what they have not done as they ought.

Euſeb. It is too plain, that our very Repentances are ſo imperfect, as to need that they ſhould be repented of, and that we endeavour by an after-Act to ſupply what was wanting in them. And the Sick-Man is therefore to call over again, as he has Time, and his Memory, and his Command of himſelf will allow, the main Offences of his Life paſt, and to humble himſelf for them, and to try to promote in himſelf, all the Deteſtation of them that may be, and to pray and entreat for the Pardon of them, and together with theſe, of his *Secret Faults* likewiſe, ſuch as poſſibly had eſcaped him at the Times of their Commiſſion, but which now are certainly out of his Remembrance, and as for this Reaſon they are not capable of, ſo neither do they require a particular Repentance: If he has been guilty of any Acts of Impatience, or Misbehaviour of whatever Sort, ſince his Sickneſs ſeized him, or ſince he laſt ſolemnly humbled himſelf for his Sins, theſe he muſt particularly call himſelf to Account for. But he muſt not confine his Repentance to theſe, but muſt ſee that he let none other eſcape unobſerved that he can call to Mind, but muſt bring them all under his Conſideration, and repeat his Prayers for Forgiveneſs of them, and for Strength againſt all Temptations to any of them, and muſt be highly diſpleaſed at himſelf, for having ever given Way to them.

Anchith. If he has heartily repented of his former Sins, and has repeated his Repentance throughout the Courſe of his Life, and has done this

this heartily and ſincerely, it is to be hoped that they were forgiven him before, and that therefore ſo much of his Work is already diſpatched.

Theoph. What you ſay, *Anchithanes*, is very true. But you ſeem not to remember that all our Pardon, whilſt we remain in this Life, is conditional, and may be forfeited by a ſubſequent Diſobedience or Neglect. You know very well the Caſe of the unmerciful Servant in the Parable, to whom his Lord, out of meer Compaſſion, had forgiven no leſs a Sum than Ten thouſand Talents; and that though all this had been freely remitted, and aſſuredly would never have been demanded of him, had he not afterwards ſhewn himſelf unworthy of ſo great a Kindneſs; yet upon his inhumanity to his Fellow-Servant, who ought him an Hundred Pence, *his Lord* upon Notice hereof *was wroth with him, and delivered him to the Tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that was due unto him.* And the Danger is the ſame to You, and Me, and All of us. For let our Sins have been ever ſo truly pardoned, it is ſtill in our Power to provoke Almighty God, to revive the whole Charge againſt us, and condemn us, as effectually as if we had never repented at all. So that you ſee what a powerful Reaſon this is, for inviting to the Performance of the Duty here treated of, namely that we depart not the World with ſuch an Unconcernedneſs for our paſt Sins, as to provoke God at laſt to bring us to a ſtrict Account for them.

8. Matt. 18. 24, &c.

Ver. 34.

Euſeb. Hence it appears that the Sick-Man is, as far as his Circumſtances will admit, to recollect the moſt material Miſcarriages of his Life paſt, to ſee whether he has repented of them all.

Theoph.

Theoph. But neither is this the Whole of the Duty mentioned. For he is to take Care of his Repentance, not only as to the Extent of it, that it reach to, and comprehend under it, as far as may be, all his Sins of whatſoever Nature, or howſoever aggravated, but as to the Intenſeneſs of it too, that it not only be ſincere and real, but ſerious and well grounded, and including in it a great Degree of Sorrow for, and Enmity to the Sins repented of. And becauſe this his Sorrow and Enmity can never come up to the Height his Guilt deſerves, this ſhould be helped, as he ſhall be able, by repeated Acts of Contrition, whereby to ſet him at the greater Diſtance from all his Iniquities. Which as it is to be done at other Times, ſo more eſpecially in Time of Sickneſs, that ſo the Penitent may leave this World in the beſt Diſpoſition he can poſſibly attain to for a better: And whoſoever is once brought to a Senſe of his own Condition, and what an irreparable Hazard he runs, every Moment that he ventures being taken hence, without a due Preparation for his Change, will hardly need to be invited to what his own Conſcience will moſt earneſtly preſs upon him, and let him have no Quiet till he has done it.

Euſeb. The Apoſtle St. *John* having ſpoken of our bleſſed Saviour's Appearance at the laſt great Day, and the unconceiveable Happineſs of the Righteous at that Time, in that they * *ſhall ſee him as he is, and ſhall be made like to him,* draws this Inference from his Aſſertion, that † *Every one who hath this Hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.* This the Apoſtle declares to be the natural Reſult of ſuch glorious Hopes as are ſet before Chriſtians, ſuch

* 1 S. Joh. 3. 2.

† ver. 3.

as

as that none who ſeriouſly attends to them, but he will find himſelf under an invincible Neceſſity, to rectify whatever is amiſs in him. And though he had not imprudently deferred it till he comes to languiſh upon a Sick-Bed; yet when he is reduced to this Condition, and has his Spirits faint, and his Strength gone, inſomuch that he is but one Remove from the Grave, and looks upon himſelf as ready every Hour to drop into it, how careful ſoever he had been to reform and amend his Doings, he will not then know how to forbear endeavouring to conclude well at the laſt, by getting his Soul into as fit a Poſture as he can, for that Judgment he continually expects to be called to. It is a great Addition to a Misfortune to have it happen, when juſt upon the Point of Safety, and be undone, when in Appearance paſt all Danger.

Ah! Portu qui teſte perit, bis naufragus ille eſt.

It is a double Infelicity to be caſt away, when a Man has ſtruggled through a long Tract of Waves and Storms, and pleaſed himſelf with the Sight of his Haven, and was ready to ſet his Foot on Shore. And none who have any Regard for their own Welfare, but will be particularly deſirous to ſecure it by all Means poſſible, when juſt ſtepping into the other World, and to this End to make their Repentance as intire and perfect as this frail State will allow them.

This is in all Appearance the * laſt Scene of

* Hic eſt extremus humanæ vitæ, velut fabulæ actus unde pendet vel æterna felicitas hominis, vel æternum exilium. *Eraſm. de p. apar. ad Mortem.*

the laſt Act of a Man's Life, and if this be not performed well, he paſſes off the Stage with Shame and Ruine, and has no Room left for farther Comfort or Hope. And this obliges him to labour after the utmoſt Exactneſs, in giving the finiſhing Stroke to the whole Work, to the end he may be approved for his Fidelity, and may enter into his Maſter's Joy. For this Cauſe he is to examine himſelf how far his *Converſation* has been *as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt*, and to own and bewail his Guilt where it has been otherwiſe, to be humbled for all his leſſer, and even for his involuntary Sins, and to ſue moſt earneſtly for Mercy and Pardon through Chriſt, and to reſolve to do or ſuffer any Thing, rather than ever willingly to diſpleaſe him more.

A Prayer for Ability to perfect our Repentance.

I.

O *Lord God Almighty, who dwelleſt in the higheſt Heavens, and whoſe Kingdom ruleth over all; I can never ſufficiently lament my Sins and Offences, whereby I have from Time to Time provoked thee againſt mine own Soul. Let it not be in vain that thou haſt thus long born with me, and not cut me off, as I had juſtly deſerved. Grant I may be more ſenſible than ever of my own Vileneſs, and Unworthineſs, by reaſon of my manifold Iniquities. And vouchſafe me ſuch Aſſiſtances of thy Holy Spirit, as that I may be enabled to cleanſe, and purify my ſelf from all Pollution; and ſuch Fervour and Earneſtneſs in my Addreſſes to thee, that I may obtain thy Pardon, and whatſoever elſe I ſeek to thee for:*

Deal

Deal not with me as I have deſerved at thy Hand, but ſpeak Peace to my Soul, and command Deliverance for me. I am thine, O ſave me; and do not ſo remember my Sins, as not to remember alſo that thy Property is always to have Mercy, and to forgive. Hear me, O Lord, when I call upon thee. And caſt me not away in the Time of Weakneſs; forſake me not when my Strength faileth me. It is but a very little Time that I can expect to continue in this World; help me to improve it ſo, as that I may ſecure to my ſelf an Intereſt in the Bliſs and Felicity of that which is to come. Compleat my Repentance; encreaſe my Graces; ſubdue all my Luſts and Paſſions; promote all my good Inclinations, and lead me in the Way everlaſting; ſuffer me not, whenever Death ſhall come, to die with any Guilt upon my Conſcience, with an Affection to any Thing that is Evil, or with any Sin not repented of. Make me to love thee with all the Powers and Faculties of my Soul, to fear thee above all Things, to obey thee dutifully and conſtantly, and ſo to endeavour by all Means poſſible to wipe off the Stain of whatever is diſpleaſing to thee. My Deſire is truly to bid Defiance to all my Sins, and never to look favourably again upon any one of them, to humble my ſelf before thee to that Degree, that thou mayeſt look graciouſly upon me, and be reconciled to me. Help me, I beſeech thee, to ſearch out all my Tranſgreſſions, and ſo to judge my ſelf for them, as that I may not be judged and condemned by thee at the laſt Day. Be merciful, O Lord; be merciful to me. Forſake me not in my Extremity; but watch over me for Good. Forgive my Sins; heal all my Infirmities; receive and ſtrengthen me; bleſs, refreſh, and comfort me; and cauſe me to rejoice in thee, both now and at the Hour of Death, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

II.

O Almighty and everlasting God, vouchsafe, I beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern both my Heart and Body in the Ways of thy Laws, and in the Works of thy Commandments, that through thy most mighty Protection, both here and ever, I may be preserved in Body and Soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Theoph. Another Duty ——

Euseb. I would not be thought rude, good *Theophilus*, in interrupting you; and yet I cannot forbear entreating, before you proceed to the next Duty, to do a Piece of Justice to our most excellent Church and Liturgy, in relation to what you have been discoursing under this last Head.

Theoph. Pray how is that, *Eusebius*?

Euseb. I know not how to forbear taking Notice, what just Reason you have hereby given, to wonder why any should so needlessly take Exception, at the Petition in the Litany, wherein we pray for *Deliverance from sudden Death.*

Theoph. A very reasonable Petition certainly!

Euseb. No doubt it is. For though a sudden Death * may well be supposed far easier, than that which makes its slow and gradual Approaches, and gives Warning some time before it actually makes its Seizure: And again, though a good Man may die very happily, when snatched away without any Notice; yet

* Mitius ille perit, subitâ qui mergitur undâ,
Quàm sua qui liquidis brachia lassat aquis.
Ovid. de Ponto. l. 3. Eleg. 7.

where a Matter of the higheſt Importance imaginable is depending, a Wiſe-man would deſire to depart hence with all the Advantage he can, and as compleatly fitted for, and intitled to as large a Meaſure of Happineſs, as may be. And were I ever ſo confident of being tranſlated into Heaven, whenſoever I am taken hence, as I hope I ſhall be; I could however be very well content, to bear ſome Days of Pain and Sickneſs here, if they may but any way contribute, either to the greater Certainty of my Salvation in the other World, or to my obtaining an ampler Share of its Felicity.

Theoph. This Exception to the *Litany* is highly unreaſonable and ill grounded, *a Sudden Death* being oftentimes very unhappy. It is unhappy as to this World, occaſioning divers ſad Inconveniences to Families, by preventing thoſe Settlements of Eſtates, which might have made a peaceable and ſuitable Proviſion for the ſeveral Members of them. And it is far more unhappy in relation to another Life, by preventing either in whole, or in part, that Preparation that might otherwiſe have been made for it. It may poſſibly ſeize a good Man in ſuch diſadvantageous Circumſtances, as to become of very ill Conſequence to him; and may ſnatch away the Sinner, and ſend him forthwith to Hell, without any Sort of Warning. It prevents likewiſe the Exerciſe, and ſo deprives of the Reward, of that Patience and Submiſſion to the Divine Will, which are the proper Employment of a Time of Sickneſs, and that Sorrow for Sin, and thoſe Purpoſes of Amendment, which are the moſt genuine Fruits of a lingring Death. And can any reaſonable Man think, the avoiding

ing a few Days Smart, will countervail theſe, and all the other Miſchiefs that may ariſe from it?

Euſeb. I ſee not how he can. Which was the Foundation of my Obſervation, and ſuch as I perſwade my ſelf will hold good againſt all that Prejudice, or Fear, or Self-love may urge to the contrary.

Anchith. I readily agree with you both in this; and am at this Time ſo far from Repining, or being any way diſſatisfied, at what it has pleaſed God to lay upon me, that on the other Hand I now eſteem it a particular Bleſſing that he has allowed me this Time of Sickneſs, wherein both to *ſet my Houſe in Order*, and more eſpecially to *trim my Lamp*, and finiſh my Accounts, and *commend my Spirit into his Hands* with that Faith, and Humility, and Contrition which becomes one in my Circumſtances. I am now upon the Concluſion of my Warfare; and can you ſuſpect I would behave my ſelf ſo unworthily, as to complain that I am required to continue the Fight a few Days longer? So far from this, that I ſhall never eſteem my Sickneſs too long, if it prove a Means at laſt of any Way increaſing my Reward in the other State. All my Concern is, leſt through Careleſneſs, and Negligence, and a Love of the World, or the Wiles and Stratagems of the Devil, I ſhould be withheld from making that Improvement of it, which may be juſtly expected from me.

Theoph. Such ought to be the Care of all good Men; and the more of it, ſo much the better. Wherefore I humbly beſeech Almighty God, to increaſe it in you, and all in your Condition. But now to proceed.

Arming our ſelves againſt the Fear of Death.

IV. A farther Duty incumbent upon the Sick-Man is, *to arm himſelf againſt the Fear of Death.* What the Conſequents of Death are, has been already obſerved, to put Perſons upon a diligent Preparation for it; but not to intimidate and diſcompoſe them with the Dread of it. For to the good Man it is no ſuch Enemy, as that he ſhall need to be diſmayed at it. It is to him no other, than a Deliverance out of this Vale of Tears, this Region of Sorrows and Complaints, into thoſe more delightful Manſions, where will be nothing but Joy, and Pleaſure, and Honour, and Glory, and Majeſty, and the moſt ſublime, moſt rapturous, and moſt laſting Bliſs, Felicity, and Happineſs, to reign with the bleſſed Angels, the holy Prophets, the glorious Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, the triumphant Saints and Martyrs for ever and ever. So that all the Harm of Death to ſuch proceeds not from it ſelf, but purely from their own Miſapprehenſion of it, and from their not having yet attained to a right Notion of the Effect it is like to have upon them. For let a Man be once well ſecured of an Intereſt in God's Mercy, and our bleſſed Saviour's Mediation, and he will ſee nothing in Death that would tempt him to flee from it; and if he does not earneſtly long for it, he will however receive it with an Evenneſs of Mind, and a chearful Reſignation of himſelf to the divine Diſpoſal, becauſe he knows this is the only Way he has, to be inſtated in eternal Happineſs.

Euſeb. It is no Wonder that (*a*) *Epicurus* cried out of Death as φρικωδέστατον τῶν κακῶν, *the*

(*a*) Diog. Laert. l. 10. in vit. Epicuri.

dread-

dreadfuleſt of all Evils. As *Ariſtotle* alſo profeſſed it to be (*b*) *the moſt Terrible of all Terribles.* Yet were there ſuch amongſt the Heathens as would have taught them to have another Notion of it. For not only *Plato* ſpeaks of it as (*c*) *full of Hope*, and *Antiſthenes* declared (*d*) *the greateſt Happineſs that could befal a Man, to be a happy Death*; and (*e*) the *Gymnoſophiſts* could deſpiſe the Fear of it; and (*f*) *Epictetus* wiſhed to be *releaſed* from the Bonds of this Life, and *become nearly related to the Gods*; and *Antonine* teaches of a wiſe and virtuous Man, (*g*) that he *is not concerned how late or how ſoon he dies, but is ready to depart whenever his Time comes*; but (*h*) *Cicero* expreſly affirms, that *Death is not to be reckoned an Evil, but amongſt the greateſt of Goods, and that this is a Truth he could not imagine any would queſtion. For*, ſays he, *if it removes us from all our Miſeries, into a better Life, if it neither is miſerable it ſelf, nor partakes of any Miſery, how can it be accounted Evil? But if it be a Means of bringing us to the Fruition of eternal good Things, and helps us to an Everlaſting inſtead of this Mortal Life*, (*i*) *what greater Happineſs can any one hope for?*

Theoph. This was great for one who lived before the Times of Chriſtianity, and had no other Arguments for a future State, than his own Reaſon could furniſh him with. But ſince

(*b*) Eraſm. de Præpar. ad mortem.
(*c*) In Phæd.
(*d*) Apud Diog. Laert.
(*e*) Diog. Laert in Proœm.
(*f*) Arrian. l. 1. c. 9.
(*g*) Εις ἑαυτ. l. 3. c. 6.
(*h*) De Conſolat.
(*i*) Quid morte beatius eſſe poteſt?

* 2 Tim. 1. 10. * *Life and Immortality has been brought to Light* by our Saviour, it will be ſtrange if the Profeſſors of his Goſpel are not able to bear up againſt Death with greater Magnanimity, and a more encouraging and bleſſed Hope than was before to be expected. Death is now diſarmed of all its former Terror. And we have no Reaſon to ſhrink from it, unleſs it be through our own Folly, in not having made a timely Preparation for it.

Euſeb. It is a Matter then of ſingular Importance, to learn to die whilſt we live, and may poſſibly be as yet ſome Diſtance from Death. And there is none therefore who has not great Reaſon to be often ruminating upon his latter End, and trying to fit himſelf for it; and become in a Manner acquainted with it before-hand, that ſo whenſoever it ſhall come within his view, it may appear no ſtrange or ſurpriſing Spectacle, nor he receive its Summons with Reluctancy. Death is frequently in Scripture compared to Sleep. And as we compoſe our ſelves to the one, by putting off our Cloaths, lying down in our Beds, drawing our Curtains, and cloſing our Eyes; ſo ought all likewiſe to prepare themſelves for the other, by reflecting upon the Certainty of it, the little Reaſon a good Chriſtian has to be afraid of it, the Deliverance it will be to him from his Pains and Sickneſs, and all the other Evils of this Life, and the Security it will bring with it of never being liable to any of them for the Future; but eſpecially the Neceſſity of it in order to the Poſſeſſion of thoſe infinite Rewards which are promiſed to the Righteous in the other State, ſuch as *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive.* Happi-

neſs

neſs incomparably beyond all that this World affords, abounding with Bleſſings of divers Sorts, and of ineſtimable Value, and which will continue for evermore. Which none can believe and expect, without finding the Thoughts of Death eaſy to him, and its Approach welcome. Nor can any of the Things of this Life be ſuppoſed to have ſuch an Influence upon him, as that he ſhould not be ready to part with them upon ſo good an Account. He will rather have brought himſelf to triumph over Death, as no longer able to do him any Miſchief, bleſſing himſelf at the Sight of it, and crying out in the Apoſtle St. *Paul*'s Language; * *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin; and the Strength of Sin is the Law: But Thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And who would not glory in ſuch a Deliverance? He is no wiſe Man that would not deſire to be able thus to comfort himſelf, upon a Proſpect of his approaching Diſſolution; that whenever it comes, no Guilt may diſcompoſe him, no Fears diſturb, or interrupt the Peace of his Mind; but his Soul may take its Flight into the other World, with a joyful and chearing Hope of eternal Reſt and Glory. Nor is he a Friend to Himſelf, and to his own principal Intereſt, who would not be at whatever Pains to get himſelf into this Condition. It is a juſt Obſervation of † Biſhop *Taylor*, that *He who is afraid of Death, with a violent and tranſporting Fear, a Fear apt to diſcompoſe his Duty and his Patience, either loves this World too much, or dares not truſt God for the next.* And St. *Auguſtine* ſuppoſes, that a righ-

* 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57.

† *Holy Dying*, Ch. 3. §. 8.

tpous Man * *Ideo moti velit, &c. will desire to die, not out of an Aversion to this present Life, but because of the Hope and Expectation he has of living far better in the other State.* And it must be granted, that though Death it self be not agreeable, the charming Prospect, that the good Christian has beyond it, may very well remove all the Bitterness of it, and make it at least as tolerable, as a tempestuous Voyage at Sea is to the worldly minded Man, when in order to a noble Estate and Authority.

Archith. No Pains of Death can be too sharp to be born in order to the Attainment of those *exceeding great and precious Promises*, which are made by the Gospel, to all that faithfully labour after them. And oh! that it may please Almighty God to give me a sure Title to them, and I shall never fear any Thing that can befal me in my Passage towards them.

A Prayer for Victory over Death.

O *Almighty Lord God, thou alone knowest how near I am to my great Change; If thou wilt thou canst raise me up, and grant me a longer Continuance here. But I find so great an Alteration in my self, and the Violence of my Distemper has spent me to that Degree; that I can expect nothing but Death, and that too in a short Space: To thee therefore I flee for help, beseeching thee to support my Spirits by thy divine Influence, that I be not discouraged, nor discomfited in my last Conflict. Death, I am too sensible, is terrible to Nature, and the Guilt of my Sins lies heavy upon me; and this Life is not yet wholly divested of its Temptations. So that I*

* De Civ. Dei, l. 14. c. 25.

have

have great Need of thy Aſſiſtance, thy Mercy and Goodneſs, to carry me through theſe Difficulties, and protect me againſt the Fears of Death, that under whatſoever Form it ſhall preſent it ſelf, I may not be affrighted at it. Fix my Mind, O God, upon the glorious Recompence of Reward promiſed above in Heaven; which infinitely ſurpaſſes all that this lower World contains. And convince me, I beſeech thee, of my Title to it. Aſſure me that, in Chriſt Jeſus, my Sins are forgiven me, and thou of thine abundant Goodneſs art reconciled to me, as if I had never ſinned againſt thee. Theſe are unſpeakable Bleſſings that I beg of thee; but ſince thou haſt encouraged me to ask them, with Hopes of Acceptance, and my Saviour has graciouſly promiſed thoſe who unfeignedly come to him, that he will in no wiſe caſt them out, this emboldens me to pray, that what I dare by no Means ask in my own Name, thou wilt condeſcend to give me in the Name, and for the ſake of thy ever bleſſed, and dearly beloved Son, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

Euſeb. What would you preſcribe next, *Theophilus*?

Theoph. V. *To improve his Faith in Chriſt,* that he call to Mind the ineſtimable Price his Lord has paid for him, the wonderful Degree whereto he humbled himſelf for our Redemption, and the full Satisfaction and Atonement hereby made for all our Sins, and comfort himſelf with the Conſideration of ſo tranſcendent a Deliverance, and ſtedfaſtly rely upon Chriſt for the Benefit of it. He knows aſſuredly, that *there is no Salvation in any other,* Act. 4. 12. there being *no other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved,* but his alone; and moreover that the Salvation purchaſed by him is of univerſal Extent, that every *Improving our Faith in Chriſt.*

every one who duly ſeeks after it, may be
S. Joh. 3. 16. Partaker of it. For ſo ſays St. *John*, *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*, to the end *that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.* And to the
Act. 10. 43. ſame Purpoſe St. *Peter* teſtifies, that *to him give all the Prophets witneſs, that through his Name whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins.* And *to them that look for him*, as the
Hebr. 9. 28. Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* teaches, *he ſhall appear the ſecond Time, without Sin, unto Salvation.* So that it is eaſy to obſerve, what excellent Encouragement Chriſtians have to place their Truſt in Chriſt, and depend upon him for the Pardon of their Sins, and the Acceptance of their lame and imperfect Righteouſneſs, in Hope of obtaining, by his Mediation, an Intereſt in the Kingdom of Heaven, which they could never have pretended to without him. And though ſuch a Faith as this will never of it ſelf juſtify and ſave us, being but one Branch of that Holineſs, which the Goſpel requires of all its Profeſſors; yet is it of ſuch abſolute Neceſſity, that there is no Hope of being ſaved without it. For alas! it is impoſſible for poor ſinful Creatures, to be admitted into Glory, any other Way than by the Blood
1 Tim. 2. 6. of Chriſt, *who gave himſelf a Ranſom for all*; and *through whoſe Stripes* alone *we are healed.*
Iſa. 53. 5. But ſince he has thought fit to offer himſelf in our ſtead, to become a Price of Redemption for us, every good Chriſtian may well look upon himſelf, as in a happy Condition through him. For now ſays the Apoſtle, *there is no*
Rom. 8. 1. *Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus; who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.*
Ver. 33, 34. And again, *Who ſhall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that juſtifieth: Who is he*

that

that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right Hand of God, who alſo maketh Interceſſion for us. And what a Support is this to the dying Man? who if he can but look back, and ſee that he has been careful to approve himſelf a faithful Diſciple of our bleſſed Lord, may reſt aſſured that no Slips or Infirmities, nor even his groſſer Sins, if ſincerely repented of, ſhall obſtruct his Entrance into Glory? He has now * *Boldneſs*, or Liberty, or as † *Grotius* underſtands the Phraſe, *Jus intrandi in ſummum cælum*, a Right to enter into the higheſt Heaven *the Holieſt of all, by the Blood of Jeſus, by a new and living Way, which he hath conſecrated for us, through the Veil, that is to ſay, his Fleſh*, aſſumed at his Incarnation, and afterwards offered upon the Croſs; and needs not doubt, but, if we our ſelves put no Rub in the Way, *he who ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, will with him alſo freely give us all Things*; Life, and Comfort, and Joy here, and eternal Felicity hereafter. This is an Inſtance of unparallel'd Loving-kindneſs, that muſt neceſſarily baniſh all unreaſonable Diffidence from the Mind of every good Man. And let no one therefore in the leaſt diſtruſt his Readineſs to fulfil all his Promiſes, and make all thoſe Partakers of his Salvation, who have faithfully endeavoured to capacitate themſelves for it. Here therefore are three Things the Sick-Man has to do: *Firſt*, He is to weigh well with himſelf his own forlorn Condition, without this Salvation. It is the great Unhappineſs of

Rom. 8. 32.

This the Sick-Man is to do, by conſidering his own ſad and forlorn Condition.

* Παῤῥησίαν, Hebr. 10. 19, 20.
† *In* Loc.

fallen

fallen Man, that none of us can juſtify himſelf before God, nor make an Atonement for the manifold Iniquities, wherewith we are all too manifeſtly chargeable before him. Though he has not only deliver'd his Will to us plainly and intelligibly, and ſtrictly enjoin'd our Obedience to it, but has moreover given us infinite Encouragement to the Obſervance of it; yet ſuch is both the Weakneſs and the Depravity of our Nature, ſo prevalent are the Temptations we meet with in the World, and ſo ſubtile the Contrivances of our ſpiritual Adverſary for our Ruin, and as the Effect hereof, ſo many and heinous are our Sins, and ſo deadly the Guilt contracted by them, that we were all in a moſt deplorable Caſe, and muſt inevitably have periſh'd everlaſtingly if left to our ſelves, it being utterly out of our Power to reſcue our ſelves, from the true Vengeance that hung over our Head, by Reaſon of theſe our Tranſgreſſions.

Euſeb. This no Man can deny, that has ever taken an Account of his paſt Life, nay, that does but carefully ſurvey the Actions of any one Day of his Life. And for this Reaſon it is, that Repentance is continually called for, throughout the Goſpel, as of abſolute and indiſpenſable Neceſſity in order to Salvation.

Theoph. It is ſo. And this ſhews how miſerable a State we had all been in, if left to our ſelves; inaſmuch as then we could none of us have had a Title to any Thing better than everlaſting Deſtruction, the heavy Wrath of God being the juſt Demerit of our Undutifulneſs and Diſobedience.

Euſeb.

Euseb. This therefore the sick Man is to ponder with himself, and lay seriously to Heart, to humble him for his Sins, and dispose him for the Pardon of them.

Theoph. And not only so; but farther to make him more sensible of his unspeakable Happiness, in having a Remedy provided for him, when in such dreadful Circumstances. Which is the next Thing he is to consider well with himself, namely, the infinite Goodness of God in entring into a new and more gracious Covenant with Sinners, whereby to open a Passage into Life and Happiness, that all who worthily apply themselves to him may be saved, notwithstanding all their Guilt. His Patience was admirable, in bearing with them, and not delivering them up to the just Severities of his Indignation, and cutting them off in their Provocations, as they had highly deserv'd. But this alone had been only a short Reprieve, which would have left them in a little Time to fall under the Weight of his Vengeance. Wherefore, to prevent this, he most mercifully condescended to admit them again into Covenant with him, upon far more favourable Terms, than what had been formerly insisted upon; freely engaging thro' Christ, and by Virtue of his Mediation, and Sufferings in our Behalf, to forgive the Sins of all those who believe and repent, and give them to inherit eternal Life. And now we may entirely depend upon it, as an undeniable and undoubted Truth, that Christ our Lord *has by the Sacrifice of himself obtain'd eternal Redemption for us*; a Redemption that will be of eternal Advantage, to all who faithfully perform the Conditions requir'd on our Part, *and has perfected*

And the Remedy that God has graciously provided for him.

Heb. 9. 12.

fected for ever them that are ſanctified. He is
St. John 1. 29. that holy, that ſpotleſs *Lamb of God, who hath*
Hebr. 12. 24. *taken away the Sins of the World*; and whoſe
* Rom. 4. 25. *Blood ſpeaks better Things than that of Abel.* * *He was deliver'd for our Offences, and rais'd again for our Juſtification.* He has done all that could now be deſir'd, and abundantly more than could formerly be imagin'd, to ſave us from the Puniſhment due to our Sins, and advance us to a State of immortal Happineſs, having undertaken not only to procure the Pardon of our Sins, and advance us to Heaven when we die, but in the mean Time to conduct us in
Acts 26. 18. the Way thither; to *open our Eyes, and turn us from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that we may receive Forgiveneſs of our Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are ſanctified by Faith that is in him.* And his Undertaking has not failed, as indeed it could
Chap. 5. 31. not, of its deſign'd Succeſs. For *Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Iſrael, and Remiſſion of Sins,* Repentance in order to Salvation, and then Remiſſion of whatever Sins are thus repented of. Chriſt having ſuffer'd in our Nature, the Puniſhment due to our Sins, has thereby made Satisfaction to his Father's Juſtice, and ſo they ſhall not be imputed to us, nor we puniſhed again for them. God is now reconciled to us in and by Chriſt, and as ready to receive all true Penitents into his Favour, as if they had never ſinned againſt him. Thus much the Apoſtle St. *Paul* teaches, 2 *Cor.* 5. 18, 19. *All Things*, that is all Things relating to our new and ſpiritual Creation, ſpoken of in the Verſe foregoing; All theſe Things *are of God*, the Author of them, *who hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, and*

hath

hath given unto us, to the Apoſtles, and the Miniſters of the Goſpel, *the Miniſtry of Reconciliation*; *to wit, that God was in Chriſt, reconciling the World unto himſelf, not imputing their Treſpaſſes unto them.* And he repeats it again, Col. 1. 19, 20, 21, 22. *It pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all Fulneſs dwell: And having made Peace through the Blood of the Croſs, by him to reconcile all Things to himſelf; by him, I ſay, whether they be Things in Earth, or Things in Heaven. And you that were ſometimes alienated, and Enemies in our Minds by wicked Works, yet now hath he reconcil'd, in the Body of his Fleſh through Death, to preſent you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his Sight.* And if we now miſcarry after all, the Fault is wholly our own, and all our Miſery and Deſtruction is owing purely to our ſelves.

Euſeb. Hence it appears, what mighty Obligations we are all under, earneſtly and indefatigably to labour, that *the Foundation*, the Word and Promiſe *of God*, may *ſtand ſure* as to our ſelves in particular; and that as we deſire *the Lord* ſhould *know*, and acknowledge us to be *his*, we in order hereto be careful to *depart from Iniquity*. Nor is it to be imagined, how Chriſtians ſhould promiſe themſelves, to be benefited by our Saviour's ſuffering in our Stead, and all the Promiſes of Grace and Mercy conſequent hereto, whilſt they refuſe to perform the Conditions requir'd on their Part. O Bleſſed *Jeſus!* Didſt thou become Incarnate, and Suffer, and Die upon my Account? And doſt thou now intercede in Heaven for me, to obtain the Pardon of my Sins, and reinſtate me in thy Father's Favour? And can I poſſibly be ſo horribly ungrateful to Thee, ſo deſperately regardleſs of my own

Welfare, and ſo ſhamefully forgetful of all the Obligations I am under, as ſtill to perſiſt in a moſt inexcuſeable Diſobedience to thy Commands? This were ſuch an Inſtance of unpardonable Stupidity, that both Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, may well ſtand amaz'd at the Thought of it.

Anchith. O the Folly, and Madneſs, of rejecting eternal Life, when ſo graciouſly, ſo miraculouſly purchaſed for us, tender'd to us, and moſt effectually ſecur'd to all that do not ſenſelesly incapacitate themſelves for it! What can thoſe who are guilty of it poſſibly expect, but to *be puniſh'd with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power; when he ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admir'd in all them that believe?*

2 Theſ. 1. 9.

Theoph. Your Inference is very juſt; for ſince ſo glorious a Redemption has been wrought for us, wretched muſt be the Caſe of all that neglect and deſpiſe it; who ſhall not only receive no Benefit by it, but ſhall be made to pay ſeverely for their Contempt of it. And for this Reaſon, a Third Thing requir'd of the Sick-Man in order to a ſteady Reliance upon Chriſt for Salvation, is to weigh with himſelf, what Diſpoſition he is in for ſo ineſtimable a Bleſſing. When our Saviour gave himſelf for us, to *deliver us from the Wrath to come*, and procure us *an Inheritance with the Saints in Light*, he demanded a Capacity or Fitneſs for it, in all that would hope to attain to this *great Salvation*, that they ſhould be *meet for it.* For ſo ſays the Apoſtle, *Giving Thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

Col. 1. 12.

And

And whether a Man be thus meet, can be known no other Way, but by a ſerious Enquiry into his own Heart and Life, to ſee what Evidence he can find there of his Repentance and Uprightneſs of Converſation. For which Cauſe the ſick Man is particularly concern'd to re-examine his Conſcience, and to perfect what that diſcovers to be amiſs in him, with all the Zeal and Induſtry in his Power. He ſhould call to Mind, as far as he ſhall be able, the Graces that had been entruſted with him, and what Improvement he has made of them, the Patience that has been exercis'd towards him, and the temporal Bleſſings that have been beſtow'd upon him, and to what Purpoſes he has us'd them, the Truths that have been reveal'd to him, and how firmly he has believ'd them; the Precepts of Holineſs that were given him in charge, and how conſcientiouſly he has obſerv'd them; the Promiſes and Threatenings that have been annex'd to the Performance or Neglect of his Duty, and what Influence they have had upon him, how thankful he has been to our bleſſed Lord, for his infinite Love in Dying for him, and what Care he has taken to qualify himſelf, for the unconceivable Benefit of it. Theſe ſeveral Parts of our moſt holy Religion, he was to attend to all his Life long; and now that he ſees it drawing to a Concluſion, common Reaſon would direct him to look back, and try how far he has anſwer'd his Obligation, and where he finds he has not done it, to ſet himſelf, if poſſible, to obtain a Pardon for his Diſobedience, before it be too late. He is * to try and judge himſelf; † *to prove his own Works*; to ‖ examine whether *Chriſt Jeſus be formed in him,*

* 1 Cor. 11. 28.
† Gal. 6. 4.
‖ 2 Cor. 13. 5.

him, or he be a Reprobate. And if upon an impartial Scrutiny he can acquit himself, as having fairly endeavour'd to order his Life in all Respects as becomes a good Christian, this will be a solid Foundation for an Expectation of those Glories, and that incomparable Reward, his blessed Saviour has died to purchase for him. Or if his Carriage appears to be otherwise, it will then have this Effect, that it will naturally, and necessarily, put him upon a Reformation, wherein soever he perceives himself to have been faulty, and so will be the properest Course he can take, for obtaining an Interest in our Saviour's Merits.

Euseb. Then it seems, besides the examination of our selves, to be practised by every one, throughout the Course of his Life, you would have the Sick over and above to review, and examine their Examination, and see what Flaws they can find in it on the one Hand, or what Comfort and Encouragement from it on the other.

Theoph. Unless they do this, I cannot see what lasting Ground of Comfort they can have in themselves, when they come to die. This is the only Method of discovering them to themselves, and letting them see what Room is left for them to promise themselves, that our Saviour will own them for his Disciples, and give them to partake of the happy Fruits of his Sufferings and Intercession.

Euseb. If upon such Enquiry they find that they have set themselves *with Purpose of Heart to cleave unto the Lord*, and to observe his Commandments, and have unfeignedly repented of all their Breaches of them, they need not

Rom. 2. 6, 7.

question

queſtion their Salvation. For the Scripture is very expreſs, that God *will render to every Man according to his Doings*; and particularly *to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life*; that *we muſt all appear before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the Things done in the Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*; that *the Righteous ſhall go into Life eternal*; and, in a Word, that *they are bleſſed, who do the Commandments, that they may have a Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter through the Gates into the City*, the Kingdom of Heaven repreſented in that and the foregoing Chapter, under the Figure of a City. 2 Cor. 5. 10. St. Mat. 25. 46. Rev. 22. 14.

Theoph. All ſuch, it is very plain, ſhall be ſaved. But then it is as plain, that they ſhall be ſaved only through the Merits and Mediation of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. For being after the beſt of their Services, not only unprofitable, but in too many Reſpects undutiful Servants, as upon Enquiry they will find themſelves to have been, they muſt ſtill be but in a woful Condition, if they had nothing but purely their own Righteouſneſs to depend upon. And it is therefore an undoubted Truth, that when we have taken all the Care we can to pleaſe God, we muſt yet fly to his Mercy through Chriſt, and muſt beg, and pray, and hope, and truſt, to be accepted only upon his Account. Our own Obedience is manifeſtly an indiſpenſable Condition of Salvation; but this is ſo very lame and imperfect, and has ſo many Failings and Defects in it, that it muſt be acknowledg'd after all, to be far from deſer-

ving what we aim at by it. * Christ is the only meritorious Cause of all our Hopes; and it is through him alone that we can expect to attain the Accomplishment of them. And on him therefore must the Christian be sure to rely, as his only Stay, he, and none but he, being able to secure the Salvation of all that come to God by him. *Eternal Life is the Gift of God through him*; and our only Way of coming at it, is by a diligent Observance of the Divine Will in all Respects, and then a serious and devout Application to the Throne of Grace for Reconciliation and Favour, thro' his all-sufficient Merits and Intercession, that by his Interest and Kindness our past Sins may be forgiven, and our present and future Services accepted, and our Souls eternally saved. But never is this Application more seasonable, or more highly necessary, than at the Close of our Lives, when the Day wears away apace, and *the Night* draws on, *wherein no Man can work*. Then is a more especial Opportunity for trying to engage our Saviour on our Side, to plead for us with the Father, to represent his own Sufferings in our Behalf, and to gain us an Admission into those blissful Regions, whither he is *gone before to prepare a Place for us*. And by how much the better Hope any have in this Respect, by so much the easier will they find the Remainder of their Days

Rom. 6. 23.

* Si nostris benefactis confidimus exultabit adversarius: Sin in Domino Jesu figamus sacram Ancoram Spei, concideret Hostis noster, &c. *Erasm.* de Præparat. ad Mortem.

here,

here, and so much the more comfortable will be their Departure hence. And consequently this is to be one considerable Part of the sick Man's Care, to see how the Case stands betwixt God and his Soul, and what Ground he can find, to comfort and encourage himself in a steady Dependance upon our Saviour, and how he may best promote his Interest in him.

Archith. It is a most inestimable Blessing to a poor penitent Sinner, that when he is about to end his Days, he can hope for the Remission of his Sins, and an Entrance in Heaven, upon so favourable Terms as are propounded by the Gospel, to those who embrace them as there tendered to all true Believers. And I most humbly beseech Almighty God, that this may continue my Case to the last, that as I have this Hope at present, it may still support and never fail me.

A Prayer for a truly Christian and Saving Faith in Christ, and his Mediation.

O Most gracious and merciful Lord God, whose immense Compassion prevail'd with thee to take Pity upon fallen Man, and in thy appointed Time, to give thine only begotten and dearly beloved Son, to become a Price of Redemption for him, to rescue him from the intolerable Tortures whereto he lay Obnoxious, and to capacitate him for an eternal Enjoyment of Thee, and of all thine inestimable Rewards, in Heaven; Grant that by his Mediation, I may obtain the Forgiveness of all my Sins, the Assistance of thy holy Spirits and whatever is necessary for leading me into the Way of Righteousness, and conducting me at length to thine everlasting Kingdom. Let thy holy Spirit not only produce, but daily encrease in me such a Dependance upon the Merits of my blessed Saviour, and such a through Conviction of the all-sufficient Efficacy of his Passion, as that I may firmly, and at all Times, place my Trust in him, hoping for Salvation through him alone. And yet suffer me not in any wise so to rely upon him, as to neglect the Duty requir'd on my Part, and without which I am sufficiently assured, that I never can be saved. Permit me not to content my self with a dead inoperative Faith, and so to deceive my self to my own Destruction. But make me duly mindful both of thy Promises and of thy Commandments, that I may neither slight the one, nor allow my self in the known Violation of any of the other. Give me such a Sense of what my Saviour has done and suffer'd for me, and the great Need I stand in of Mercy through him, as that I may neither cast away my

Confidence

Confidence in him, nor place it any where, but in him. Plant in me such a Faith as may conform me to his Example, may work by Love, may overcome the World, and may crucify the Flesh, with its Affections and Lusts. And though I cannot reflect upon my manifold Sins and Iniquities, without a hearty and deep Humiliation for them; yet let not the greatest of them ever tempt me to despair of thy Goodness. All my Hope is in thine infinite Mercy, and my Redeemer's invaluable Merits; O do thou confirm and establish this Hope in me evermore. And vouchsafe to reckon me amongst thy Children, and the Heirs of that eternal Glory, which thou hast promised to all that love and fear thee, through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Seeking earnestly to God for Mercy.

Theoph. VI. In the next Place, the sick Man should be put in Mind, *To pray earnestly to God for Mercy*, that by this Means he may leave this World in a safe Condition, and be delivered from all that Guilt, which must otherwise have sunk him into the bottomless Pit. He is not only to rely upon our Saviour's Satisfaction as a sufficient Price paid for him, but to beg of God likewise to accept of it as such in relation to himself, to be throughly reconciled to him by Means of it, and to blot out all his Transgressions. And indeed there is hardly any, who is not either perfectly senseless, or abandoned as to Religion, and all that is Good, that is not ready of himself to cry to God for help, when thus upon the Borders of Destruction.

Euseb. It is natural for those who had no Sense of Duty to God at other Times, nevertheless to make their Prayers to him, when in any considerable Danger and Distress. It was not the Case only of those Mariners who sail-

Jon. 1. 4, 5. ed in the Ship with the Prophet *Jonah*, that when *there was a mighty Tempeſt in the Sea, and the Ship was like to be drowned, they cried every Man unto his God* for Safety; * but it has been the common Practice all the World over, that ſuch as had no Reverence for God at other Times, have not been able to refrain from calling upon him, when in Apprehenſion of ſome dreadful Evil like to ſeize them. It is well known how that wicked City *Nineveh* humbled themſelves, and faſted, *and cried mightily unto God*, to try if poſſibly they might prevent the ſpeedy Deſtruction wherewith they were threatened. So wicked *Ahab*, of whom it is recorded, that *there was none like him, who did ſell himſelf to work Wickedneſs in the Sight of God*; yet upon the Prophet *Elijah*'s Denunciation of Deſtruction to himſelf, and his Family, *rent his Clothes, and put on Sackcloth upon his Fleſh, and faſted, and lay in Sackcloth, and went ſoftly*, after the Manner of Mourners. † Thus *Cæſar* relates of the Inhabitants of *Marſeilles*, That when C. *Tribonius* lay in ſiege againſt them, all Sorts amongſt them, the younger and leſs conſiderate, as well as the elder and more ſerious, their Wives and Children, and their very Guards, fell to their Devotions, to beg a Deliverance. And ſo ſays God of his own obſtinate People the *Jews*, that how negligent ſoever they were of him in their Eaſe and

Chap. 3. 8, 9.

1 Kings 21. 25.

Ver. 27.

* Tum maximè Deus ex memoriâ Hominum elabitur, cum Beneficiis ejus fruentes Honorem date Divinæ Indulgentiæ deberent. At verò ſi neceſſitas gravis preſſerit, tum Deum retordantur, &c. Juſtin. l. 13.

† De Bell. Civ. l. 1.

Prosperity, their Carriage would soon be changed when Trouble came upon them, and they found themselves encompass'd with Sorrows. *In their Affliction they will seek me early.* Hos. 5. 15. Sorrows and Misfortunes awaken Men's Minds, and put them upon looking out for Help; and since they know God is the only sure Refuge for the Distressed, they scarce need to be invited at such a Time to address themselves to him. Hence it is easy to observe through all Ages, so far as we have an Account of them, how People have been wont to flock to the Temples in Times of Distress, to offer up their Devotions there, in hope of obtaining some Relief from their Grievances, of whatever Sort. And the same Method has been customary in Times of imminent Danger, as well as of present Sufferings; all Nations, whether Heathens, Jews, or Christians, having constantly practised it. And whosoever would hope for the divine Favour and Protection, must not fail to take this Course, when under any Pressure or Calamity. But never is there such Occasion for this Duty, as when a Man is seized with some violent Pain or Sickness, that gives him just Reason to expect a speedy Translation into another World. When he finds almost no Time left to do it in, this will be a cogent Motive to him, to set about it with all his Might, and never to give over till he has obtain'd a Blessing.

Theoph. For this Reason I shall not stand to press the Necessity of what every one is naturally so prone to enter upon, in Times of Danger and Difficulty; but only shall in few Words beg of our good Friend here, not to give over what he has shewn himself so ready to practise, ever since he was taken ill;

but that he will ſtill go on to pray, and will beg of all his Friends and Relations to pray for him, during his Stay in this World, that God will forgive his Sins, will purify his Heart, will mortify all the Remainders of Vice in him, will give him his holy Spirit to ſtrengthen and aſſiſt him, and will ſend his holy Angels to conduct him to Glory. This is a Courſe, my Friend, that cannot fail of being highly advantageous to you; and which you are ſure can never hurt you.

Anchith. To deal freely with you, good *Theophilus*, I muſt acquaint you, that I do ſpend a good Part of my Time in Prayer to God, both by my ſelf and with others; and by the Grace of God I ſhall perſiſt in it, whilſt I am able to ſpeak, or can lift up my Hands or Eyes toward Heaven. And I do alſo beg of you here preſent, and of all my other Friends, to aſſiſt me, with your Charitable Prayers to Almighty God, in my Behalf.

A Prayer

A Prayer for Ability to pray with Fervour and Devotion.

O H most gracious God, do thou incline my Heart more and more to call upon thee, that when I can do nothing else, I may yet pray to and praise thee. Inspire my Soul with devout Affections, suitable to thy holy Office, that I may offer up my Prayers, from a truly humble and penitent, a sincere and pious Mind, and with such Fervour and Earnestness, as that thou mayst not reject my Petitions, nor withhold thy Mercy from me, but mayst hear from Heaven thy Habitation, and return me a gracious Answer. Hear me, O Lord, for thy Mercies are great. Hear me, and all that pray for me; and our Lord Jesus Christ interceding for us all. And plenteously reward all those Prayers that are put up to thee on mine Account from whomsoever they come, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Another for Forgiveness of Sin, and a Preparation for a better State.

I T is thy Nature and Property, O Lord, always to have Mercy and to forgive. To thee it appertaineth to shew Pity to those who put their Trust in thee; on whom canst thou more suitably place thy Compassion, than on me an unworthy Sinner, who am

am ſhortly to give my Account at thy great Tribunal? Shut not up thine Ear againſt me now in my Extremity: Neither caſt me away in thy wrathful Indignation. But ſo turn thine Anger from me, who meekly acknowledge my Vileneſs, and truly repent me of my Faults; and ſo make haſt to help me in this World, to purge and purify me, and to perfect whatever is wanting in me, that I may ever live with thee in the World to come, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

Theoph. VII. Another Duty highly neceſſary at all Times, but more eſpecially in Time of Sickneſs, and upon the Appearance of Death, is, *To watch diligently againſt our grand Enemy the Devil, who is more eſpecially induſtrious and vigilant, to do us a Miſchief at ſuch a Time as this.* It is his conſtant Buſineſs to promote the Ruin of Mankind by all Means in his Power. Having involved himſelf in irrecoverable Miſery, wherein he has long ſuffer'd for his Folly, and muſt be ſure to do it thro' an endleſs Eternity; his continual Study is, by all Arts of Fraud and Treachery, to bring whomſoever he can, into the ſame woful and helpleſs Condition with himſelf; and ſo to get them under his Dominion, that he may perpetually tyrannize over them. Hence the Apoſtle St. *Peter* repreſents him, as *going about like a* furious, *roaring Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour*; watching all Opportunities to get People into his Reach, uſing whatever Means, either to affright and amaze, or to beguile and deceive them out of their Duty.

To watch diligently againſt our grand Enemy the Devil.

1 St. Pet. 5. 8.

Euſeb.

Euseb. He once gave an Account of himself, that he had been *walking to and fro in the Earth, and going up and down in it.* And the same is still his constant Practice, to the end that he may work what Evil he can to its Inhabitants. Job. 2. 2.

Theoph. He is stiled by St. *Paul, the Prince of the Power of the Air*; to put us in Mind of our Danger from the Legions of evil Spirits he has at his Command, as his Ministers and Servants, by whom he procures the Death of Sinners, as well as by his own more immediate Devices, each Way leading them on to Perdition. And no Wonder, if so potent and so maliciously indefatigable an Agent, be sadly prevalent over such as are not sufficiently provided against him. * *Plutarch*, in the Life of *Dion*, notes it as *a very ancient Tradition, that there are a Sort of wicked enchanting Dæmons, which envy good Men, and set themselves to terrify them out of their regular and virtuous Conversation; to the end, that parting with their Integrity and Innocence, they may not be in a better Condition than themselves.* Very agreeably to what the holy Scriptures teach concerning this grand Enemy of Souls, and his Emissaries and Agents, *working in the Children of Disobedience, and leading them captive at his Will.* Ephes. 2. 2. Eph. 2. 2. 2 Tim. 2. 26.

Euseb. It is his daily and hourly Employment, to plant his Engines, and lay his Snares in all Places, for obstructing our Salvation; and should be ours to arm our selves against

* P. 958.

him,

St. James 4. 7. him, and as the Apoſtle St. *James* directs, ſo to *reſiſt* him as that he may *flee from us*, and leave us to our ſelves, to fulfil the Duty requir'd of us.

Theoph. And more eſpecially when we come to draw near our latter End. Then our Adverſary looks upon himſelf, to be in a more peculiar Manner engag'd to try, if poſſible, to ſecure us to himſelf. He knows *he has then but a ſhort Time*; and if he can improve that to his Purpoſe, his Work is done, and we muſt never hope for Safety or Happineſs more. Hence he contrives all Ways, makes uſe of all Artifices, and employs all his Methods of Deluſion, that he may not only retain the Hold he had gotten upon any, but that he may enforce his Intereſt in them, till it be too late for them to think of reſcuing themſelves out of his Hand. * He puts on various Garbs, transforms himſelf into every Shape, and accommodates himſelf to all Humours, that by theſe Means he may enlarge his Dominions, and gain new Subjects to his Kingdom. One while he ſooths and careſſes the Sinner, and lulls him on in his wonted Stupidity, leſt he ſhould grow wiſe, and bethink himſelf of his dangerous State, and ſhould uſe his hearty Endeavours to get out of it. At another Time he diſcourages him by reaſon of the Difficulty of Repentance, and a truly Chriſtian Converſation; whereby to retain him ſtill under

* Ὁ διάβολος μεταχηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός, οὐχ ἵνα ἐπαινέλθῃ, ὅτι μὴ βλέπει, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἀπατήσῃ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους. Cyrill. Hieroſ. Catech. 4.

his

his Dominions. This Man he tempts to disbelieve the Doctrines of Religion, and more particularly the Immortality of the Soul, and a Life to come. That Man he prevails with, though convinc'd of the Certainty and Duration of the other State, nevertheleſs to act contrary to his Belief, and expoſe himſelf to all the dire Vengeance that is threatened to thoſe who do ſo. Some he entices to preſume upon the Divine Goodneſs, and foraſmuch as God has declar'd himſelf to be infinitely merciful, therefore not to fear, but he will at laſt receive them into his Glory, without enquiring in what Diſpoſition they are, for appearing in his Preſence, or what they can poſſibly ſay for themſelves, when he ſhall call them to Judgment. Thus he carries on the Inconſiderate in a thoughtleſs Security, till at length Death ſeizes them, before they are in a Readineſs for it; and ſo the *Door* is irretrievably *ſhut* againſt them. With others he proceeds in a quite different Manner, preſſing them to deſpair, by reaſon of the Multitude and Heinouſneſs of their Sins, and by this Means withholds them from doing what they may, in order to a Recovery. In the Time of their Health and Merriment his Cuſtom was, to repreſent Repentance to them as an eaſy Work, that might quickly be diſpatch'd at the end of their Days, when they ſhould come to take their Bed, and be fit for nothing elſe. But now the Tune is chang'd, and all his Care is to perſwade them, that it is too late to make any Attempts towards the doing what they moſt certainly ought to have done ſooner, whilſt they had Health, and Time, and

Ability for it; all which being now greatly impair'd, there is no Hope left them, of accomplishing an acceptable Repentance. *Circuit ille nos singulos*, says * St. *Cyprian*, *He goes about every one of us, and like an Enemy that has undertaken a Siege, he carefully views the Walls, and tries where the weakest Place is, and whether there be any Hope of Entrance for him. To the Eyes he proposes charming Beauties, and tempting Pleasures, that by the Sight Peoples Chastity may be ruin'd. To the Ears he presents harmonious Musick, by the affecting Sound whereof to soften, and abate their Christian Resolution. He provokes the Tongue by rude and unhandsome Language; moves the Hand to Fighting and Murder, by Affronts and Injuries; allures the Deceiver by the Bait of unjust Gain. To him that will sell his Soul for Money, he offers what he sees like to prevail with him: He promises Earthly Honours, that he may deprive us of the Heavenly; makes false Shews, to rob us of the true Riches: And whom he cannot privily deceive, he seeks to work upon by open and barefac'd Threatening, assaulting them with terrible and destructive Persecutions, whereby to discourage the faithful Servants of God, to whom he is always an implacable and dreadful Enemy; subtle in Peace, and violent in Persecution. Wherefore*, says he, *most dear Brethren, let your Mind be fortified and armed against all his Assaults, whether by open Threatenings, or by his more plausible and deceitful Insinuations; being always as ready to resist his Attacks, as he is to make them.*

* De Zelo & Livore, p. 221.

Euseb.

Euſeb. One Way or other he never fails to proſecute his malicious Deſigns with his utmoſt Vigour, watching Day and Night to take Men at an Advantage, to enſnare them when either leaſt aware of, or leaſt able to withſtand his Motions.

Theoph. Which proves the Reaſonableneſs of St. *Cyprian*'s Advice; and that the more perniciouſly ſucceſsful any have found him in theſe Attempts, the more carefully vigilant are they oblig'd to be againſt them for the future. Their former Failures ſhould certainly engage them, not only to humble themſelves under a Senſe of, and unfeigned Sorrow for them, but ſhould make them henceforward more inceſſantly upon their Guard, that they never be betray'd into the like for the Time to come.

Euſeb. If ſuch *who think they ſtand* moſt ſecurely, are nevertheleſs to *take heed leſt they fall*, by the Surprize of a ſudden, or the Violence of a ſtrong Temptation, how much more ought thoſe, whoſe former Falls have given them too ſad Evidence of their own Weakneſs? 1 Cor. 10. 12.

Theoph. And ſo ſhould thoſe, who find themſelves at any Time leſs diſpos'd than uſual, to bear up againſt him. And accordingly his peculiar Diligence at the Approach of our latter End, calls then upon all for a more eſpecial Regard to his Wiles, whereby to defend themſelves againſt him. You muſt then be ſure, as far as is conſiſtent with your weak Condition, to watch and pray againſt him, and to implore a ſingular Meaſure of the Divine Aſſiſtance, for carrying you through your laſt Agonies, with Succeſs and Conqueſt, that you may not unhappily loſe the Reward of

all your former Pains, and meet with a dreadful Diſappointment, and be everlaſtingly condemn'd, when you expected on the contrary to receive *a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away.* What * St. *Jerome* affirms, is moſt certainly true, that *Nullus Dies tutus periculo proximus*; there is no Time of thinking your ſelf ſafe, whilſt in the Neighbourhood of Danger. And foraſmuch as the greater the Danger is, the farther you are from Safety, the more watchful ought you undoubtedly to be at ſuch a Time.

Anchith. I am fully convinc'd I ought to be ſo; but my Sickneſs ſo diſcompoſes my Thoughts, that I can do nothing as I ſhould. Wherefore I beſeech Almighty God, to take Pity upon me, either to help my Infirmity, or graciouſly to accept of ſuch imperfect Duties, as that will allow me to perform.

* Procem. ad Pammach. in Lib. 2. Commentar. in Amos.

A Prayer

A Prayer for Defence againſt the Aſſaults of the Devil.

ALmighty God, and moſt merciful Father, whoſe I am, and to whom all my Services are due; to thee I now addreſs my ſelf, beſeeching thee to bow thine Ear, and hearken to me in this my Neceſſity. O look upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou uſeſt to do unto thoſe that love thy Name. Conſider my declining helpleſs Condition; and be thou my mighty Saviour and Deliverer. As my Time is ſhort, and my Strength little, ſo it is my great Unhappineſs to have a powerful and a ſubtle, as well as a deſperately malicious Adverſary, continually lying in wait for my Deſtruction: And without thy Help, I muſt inevitably periſh. I were everlaſtingly undone, were it not that thy Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs; and thou haſt graciouſly promis'd to ſuſtain thoſe who caſt their Burden upon thee. This I now deſire to do, in an humble Confidence, that thou wilt not reject me when I ſue to thee for Safety. Enable me ſo to reſiſt the Devil, that he may flee from me, and not go on to attempt my Ruin. Or if he do, yet ſuffer him not to ſucceed in his Endeavours; but of thy great Mercy fruſtrate his Deſigns, and defeat all his Wiles and Stratagems, that he may not prevail againſt me, and draw me aſide into the Ways of Sin. Though he be powerful, thy holy Spirit is incomparably more powerful; let that good Spirit conduct me ſafely, in ſpight of all the other's Devices for my Ruin. Deliver me, O my God, deliver me in thy Righteouſneſs; and let no Temptation be too ſtrong for me. Carry me victoriouſly through whatſoever Conflicts or Cala-

mities may befal me, either now, or at the Hour of Death. This I beg for Jeſus Chriſt's Sake, our Lord. Amen.

Another for Acceptance with Almighty God.

O *Merciful and gracious Lord God, who willeſt not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he ſhould turn from his Sins and live, and who art always more ready to hear, than we to pray; and art wont to give more than we deſire or deſerve; deal not with me according to my own Unworthineſs, but according to the Multitude of thy Mercies. Let not my defective Services be diſpleaſing in thy Sight. Caſt me not off, when I endeavour to approve my ſelf to thee; though with a great Mixture of Weakneſs and Imperfection. Whilſt I continue here obnoxious to Sin, and always encompaſs'd with Temptations to it, I am continually adding to the vaſt Heap of my Offences; and even my moſt holy Things are polluted and defiled. Aſſiſt me by thy Grace and holy Spirit, that I may ſerve thee more compleatly for the little Time of my Life that yet remains, than I have done hitherto. When I offer up my Petitions to thee, inſpire my Soul with ſuch devout Affections, as becomes a guilty Creature, before his highly offended Creator. And at all other Times let a Senſe of thy divine Preſence overawe my Mind, that I may ſtudy to the utmoſt to pleaſe thee, being fully reſolv'd to yield to no Motions to the contrary, how preſſing ſoever. And do thou condeſcend to caſt an Eye of Pity towards me, and to accept of ſuch an imperfect Obedience as I am capable of performing, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

Another

Another for the Direction of God's Spirit.

O *God, foraſmuch as without thee I am not able to pleaſe thee; mercifully grant that thy holy Spirit may in all Things direct and rule my Heart, that he may be to me a Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, a Spirit of Counſel and Might, a Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord, and may daily encreaſe in me thy manifold Gifts of Grace. Let him be my Guide to direct me in the Way of Righteouſneſs, my Guard to preſerve me from the Fury of the Enemy, and my Shield to beat back all his Darts. And foraſmuch as the Frailty of Man without thee cannot but fall; keep me ever by thy Help from all Things hurtful, and lead me to all Things profitable to my Salvation, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

Euſeb. I doubt we have tir'd *Anchithanes.*

Theoph. I will only beg Leave to mention one other Duty, if he can have Patience to hear it, and ſo ſhall bid him *Adieu* for this Time.

Anchith. I beſeech you take your own Time.

Theoph. VIII. Then in the laſt Place, *The ſick Man muſt ſhew himſelf perfectly reſigned to the divine Diſpoſal.* I do not ſay he muſt not murmur at God's Dealings with him, how unagreeable ſoever to Fleſh and Blood; becauſe this were ſuch exceſſive Undutifulneſs and Ingratitude together, as no good Man can ſuffer himſelf to be guilty of. But he muſt farther renounce his own moſt natural Deſires, whenſoever they

A perfect Reſignation to the Divine Appointment, whether to live or die.

they are not througly conformable to what Almighty God decrees concerning him. Otherwiſe the very Heathens will riſe up in Judgment againſt him, and will condemn him in a high Degree. Particularly * *Epictetus*, who ſticks not to profeſs concerning himſelf, that he had brought his Mind into a perfect Subjection to the Divine Will. *I have learned*, ſays he, *to conform my Will to God; inſomuch that would he have me be ſick, I would be ſo; would he have me attempt any Thing, I am ready to do it; would he have me deſire any Thing, I am willing to deſire it; would he have me acquire any Thing, I rejoice to ſet about it; would he not have me do it, neither am I for it; would he have me to die, I do not refuſe it.* In like manner, † *Socrates* being informed by *Crito*, that he was to die the next Day, return'd this Anſwer, as a Teſtimony of his ready Submiſſion to the Determinations of Providence concerning him; Ἀλλ' ὦ Κείτων, τύχη ἀγαθῇ· εἰ ταύτῃ τοῖς θεοῖς φίλον, ταύτῃ ἔστω; *It is very well*, O Crito, *and ſince it pleaſes the Gods, ſo let it be.* And ‖ *Seneca* paſſes a ſevere Cenſure upon thoſe who are not willing to part with their Life, or whatſoever other Bleſſing they have receiv'd from God, whenſoever he thinks fit to call for it. *He*, ſays he, *is unjuſt, who will not leave the ordering of the Gift to the Will of the Giver; and he is covetous, who is not ſo well pleas'd with his having receiv'd a Favour, as he is diſturb'd at the Loſs of it.*

* Arr. Epictet. l. 3. c. 26.
† Plat. in Crit.
‖ De Conſolat. ad Polyb. c. 29.

Euſeb. To the ſame Purpoſe likewiſe ſpeaks the Emperor *Antoninus*, freely owning that *Providence is clearly ſeen in the Adminiſtration of the World*, and hence exhorting, *not to die repining, but eaſy and well pleaſed, and with thankfulneſs to the Gods.* And at another Time he profeſſes his Veneration for the Governor of the World, and his Truſt and Confidence in him. * Σέβω, καὶ ἐυφραίνω, καὶ θαῤῥῶ τῷ διοικοῦντι. *I adore the Orderer of all Things, and firmly and ſtedfaſtly rely upon him*; and exhorts others, *quietly to expect their Diſſolution, whether by Way of Extinction or Tranſlation, and in the mean Time, to worſhip and praiſe the Gods, to do good to Men, to bear with them, and to refrain from making them any ill Returns, and to remember that thoſe Things which are from without, and depend neither upon their own Bodies or Souls, are neither theirs, nor at their Diſpoſal.* And again, *He determines the End of thy Acting here, who was formerly the Cauſe of thy Being, and is now of thy Diſſolution; neither of which is thine own doing. Wherefore be ſure to depart hence well pleaſed, for he that diſmiſſes thee, is ſo.* l. 6. 10. l. 5. 33. l. 12. 36.

Theoph. If the Light of Nature could teach ſuch a Submiſſion to Almighty God, how much more ſhould the Doctrines of the Goſpel incline us all to a ready Compliance with whatſoever is well pleaſing to him? And the Sick-Man therefore would do well, to recollect that God's Will is not only Supreme, Abſolute, and Independent, but moreover is infinitely Righteous and Wiſe, that he underſtands all Things, and knows the Tendencies, and foreſees the Events of them, and what

* Εἰς ἑαυτὸν, l. 2. §. 3.

Good or Hurt there is in them; and conſequently all his Diſpenſations towards any of us muſt be really beſt in themſelves, though we at preſent may not apprehend them to be ſo.

Euſeb. He might conſider alſo, how much Eccleſ. 7. 1. *the Day of one's Death is better than the Day of his Birth*; that this Life is full of Miſery and Trouble, and in no wiſe to be compared with the ineſtimable Joys and Glories, the unconceiveable Bliſs and Felicity of the other; that he is here but as a Stranger and a Pilgrim upon a Journey, and that no pleaſant one, towards a better Country; but Heaven is his End, his Home, his Father's Houſe, where alone he can be at Reſt, and where he will meet with the compleateſt Happineſs in all Reſpects; that here he is in Spiritual Thraldom, liable to manifold Temptations, in a Sort of Servitude to divers Luſts and Pleaſures, which he cannot defend himſelf againſt, without continual Care and Watchfulneſs; but there he will be abſolutely free, and reign in Splendor and Majeſty for ever and ever.

Theoph. No doubt, theſe Conſiderations muſt raiſe up the Mind of a good Man, above all he can meet with here below, and will make him not unwilling to be tranſlated into that *far better* State. The Traveller is never ſorry that he has reached the End of his Journey, and is now at Liberty to enjoy himſelf, and his Friends The Labourer is glad when his Work is over, that he may retire, and take his Reſt. The Mariner is full of Joy when he ſees his Port, and haſtens with all the Speed he can to get into it. The Soldier is ready enough to betake himſelf to

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the Refreſhment of his Winter's Eaſe, when tired with the Drudgery and Danger of the Summer's Campaign. And ſhall not the Chriſtian be as deſirous of attaining his End, and as much diſpoſed to bleſs himſelf in the Attainment of it? When he is come to the utmoſt Term of his Pilgrimage, has *fought the good Fight* of Faith, *and finiſhed his Courſe* with Integrity, and a good Conſcience; has laboured his appointed Time in his heavenly Father's Vineyard; has been long toſſed about in this World, as upon a tempeſtuous Sea; and now ſees before him a quiet and ſettled Habitation, *an immortal Crown of Glory*; a pleaſant Land, and a moſt exceedingly valuable Recompence of Reward, *an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for him*, what ſhould make him fond of tarrying any longer here?

Euſeb. To meet with Croſſes and Vexations, to be ſubject to Loſſes and Diſappointments, to be Sick and Die, is but the common Fate of his mortal Life; and what the Wiſeſt and moſt Honourable, and the Richeſt and moſt Potent Kings and Emperors, as well as their meaneſt Subjects are liable to; and it is a very unreaſonable Thing for a Priſoner to be ſo in love with his Confinement, a Captive with his Chains, or a Slave with his Drudgery and ill Uſage, as not readily to accept of a Deliverance, when offered freely, and without any other Inconvenience than quitting his Station, and removing at a Diſtance from the Cauſe of all his Diſſatisfactions and Complaints.

Theoph.

Theoph. The greateſt, and the beſt of Princes are no more exempt from natural Infirmities, and outward Caſualties and Accidents, than common People. They muſt meet with Oppoſition, and Diſobedience, and Treachery, and Conſpiracies above the Rate of others; and muſt be ill, and in Pain, and give up the Ghoſt when their Time comes, no leſs than the baſeſt of their Vaſſals. Even our bleſſed Lord, the Son of God himſelf, was not only to die, but to die a painful, ignominious, and accurſed Death upon the Croſs. And can any pretend to be his Diſciples, and refuſe to be conformed to his Example? It would certainly become us all, to ſet him before us as a Pattern for our pious Imitation, and to beg that the Will of God may be accompliſhed in us, with the ſame Submiſſion that he did; and not think our ſelves too good *to drink of the Cup that he drank of, and be baptized with the Baptiſm that he was baptized with*, or even to die a far eaſier Death than he died. So that the Sick-Man can never hope to excuſe himſelf, if he does not take Care to bring all his Longings and Deſires into Subjection, to the all-wiſe Determinations of God concerning him, whether for Proſperity or Adverſity, Health or Sickneſs, Life or Death. The doing which will not only be an acceptable Service to Almighty God, and a juſt Acknowledgment of his Sovereignty and Dominion; but will be a great Eaſe to his own Mind, and the ſureſt Method he can take to cure all thoſe tormenting Fears of Death, to which he would otherwiſe be liable. This will bring him to a Compoſedneſs of Thoughts under all Events, that whatever happens, he will

will never be diſturbed at it to any great Degree; and ſo he will be eaſy both Living and Dying, and in the readier Way to be for ever happy, when he comes into the other World.

Anchith. Oh, how happy were I, if I could once throughly conquer my ſelf in this Reſpect, ſo as to leave it intirely to Almighty God to chooſe for me. This I have heartily endeavoured, and do yet, and will endeavour as long as Breath is left in me; and will beg of God to help my Infirmities, and enable me to do it as I ought; as likewiſe that whenever he takes me hence, he will take me to himſelf.

A Prayer for an intire Reſignation to the Divine Will.

GRant me, O Lord, a ready and conſtant Submiſſion to thy moſt holy, moſt juſt, and righteous Will, that whatever becomes of me, I may always look up to thee, as the ſupreme Author of all Events, may ſee thy Hand in every Thing that befalls me, and may comfort my ſelf to think, that in all my Troubles and Difficulties, I have yet a good and gracious God to take Care of me. It is unſpeakable Love in thee, to concern thy ſelf for us poor Mortals, ſinful Duſt and Aſhes; yet ſince thou doſt not diſdain to charge thy good Providence with Us, and our Affairs, never ſuffer any of us, I beſeech thee, to make ſo ill Uſe of thy Condeſcention, as to ſhew our ſelves diſſatisfied at any of thy moſt adverſe Diſpenſations towards us; but to believe they will certainly turn to our Advantage, if we be diſpoſed

to receive them as we ought. Be with me in particular, and ſo guide and over-rule all my Deſires, that they may be intirely ſubject to thy Determination, that I may take patiently all thou layeſt upon me, and whether thou deſigneſt me for Life or Death, this or the other World, I may reſt aſſured, that thou knoweſt how to chooſe for me far better than I can for my ſelf, and may be eaſy and contented in whatever Condition, praying after the Example of our bleſſed Lord, Not my Will, but thine be done. *Grant this, O Father, for the ſake of the ſame thy Son, our Lord and Saviour.* Amen.

Another for an eaſie Departure hence.

AND *may it ſeem good in thy Sight, O gracious Lord, to ſoften the Pains of my preſent Sickneſs and approaching Agonies, and to grant me a gentle Paſſage through the Gate of Death, Thou knoweſt the Weakneſs and Frailty of humane Nature; Oh, that it may pleaſe thee to lay no heavier Load upon me, than is neceſſary for me, but grant me a favourable and happy Departure out of this miſerable World, that I may die with a quiet Mind and a peaceful Conſcience, and no exceſſive, nor laſting bodily Pains. This my own Fears preſs me to beg of thee, and I do it accordingly; but yet with all Submiſſion to thy moſt holy Will, which I pray may be done, though thou ſhouldeſt have determined otherwiſe concerning me. Only then I beſeech thee, to furniſh me with Patience, and ſupport me with ſpiritual Comforts, and not ſuffer my ghoſtly Enemy to terrify and moleſt me. And the nearer I come to*

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my Diſſolution, the more plentifully do thou manifeſt thy Mercy towards me, through Jeſus Chriſt my dear Redeemer, and only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Another for a Tranſlation into a better State.

AND when I take Leave of this earthly Body, receive me, I beg, into thy Favour. Give thy holy Angels Charge over me, to conduct me ſafe into thy Kingdom, and place me amongſt the Saints in Light, in the Boſom of Jeſus. Watch over me for good; take my Soul unto thy ſelf, waſhed and cleanſed in the Blood of Chriſt. And grant at length to this decaying Body, a bleſſed Reſurrection, and Reunion to its former Companion, that both Soul and Body may be glorified together; and that I may everlaſtingly praiſe and magnify thy holy Name, ſounding forth eternal Hallelujahs, and ſaying with thoſe in the Apocalypſe, BLESSING, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY, AND POWER, BE TO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND TO THE LAMB, FOR EVER AND EVER. Amen.

Theoph. I make no queſtion, *Anchithanes*, but you really labour after the bleſſed Frame of Mind, and the happy Tranſlation hence you earneſtly pray for. But we muſt now take our Leaves of you. And I beſeech Almighty God to ſend you a quiet Night, and to have you always in his Protection, whether Living or Dying.

Euſeb. We ought indeed to be going; but that I ſee *Theodorus* coming, and it will be fit to

to ſtay and join with him in Prayer for our worthy Friend.

Anchith. I beg this Piece of Friendſhip of you both; for I have great Need of the Prayers of all my Friends.

Theod. Peace be to this Houſe, and to all that dwell in it.

Theoph. We were juſt leaving *Anchithanes* to his Reſt, having ſufficiently tired him with a long Viſit; but ſeeing you coming, we reſolved to tarry a little longer, and offer up our Prayers with you on his Behalf; for his Recovery, if it ſeem good to the divine Wiſdom, or elſe for his Admiſſion into eternal Happineſs.

Theod. Then if you pleaſe we will begin.

Theoph. As ſoon as you pleaſe, *Theodorus*; for it is more than Time we were gone.

Theod. I will not keep you any longer.

Prayers being ended, the others withdrew, leaving Theodorus *alone with* Anchithanes; *who after a little ſeaſonable and pious Advice, left him too.*

The End of the Fifth VISIT.

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The Sixth VISIT.

They make their laſt Viſit to him.

Euſebius. *Timotheus* and *Philogeiton*, you come very ſeaſonably; I was juſt going to call upon *Theophilus*, that we might make good our Promiſe to *Anchithanes*, at whoſe Houſe we expected to meet you.

Timotheus. We are ready to attend you.

Euſeb. Here *Theophilus* is coming, and another with him.

Theophilus. Well met Sirs. Here is a Meſſenger from *Anchithanes*, to acquaint me that he is much changed ſince Yeſterday, and ſeems to be very near his End.

Timoth. Then if you pleaſe let us loſe no Time, that we do not come too late.

Theoph. He was very weak, and his Spirits low and faint Yeſterday, and if he be much alter'd ſince, he cannot be expected to laſt long; ſo that if we would hope to do him any Service, we ought to make what haſt we can.

Philogeiton. Pray let us. And if we ſhould not be able to do him any Kindneſs, yet it will be a conſiderable Kindneſs to our ſelves, to behold a Spectacle of Mortality, that will naturally put us in Mind of our own Frailty, and the Uncertainty of this tranſitory Life.

Theoph. It is no ſmall Piece of Wiſdom to number our Days aright. And nothing tends more to put us upon this, than to ſee others of the like Frame and Conſtitution with our ſelves, ſtruggling for Breath, and at length giving up the Ghoſt.

Timoth.

Timoth. This muſt put us upon reflecting what is like to become of us, when we leave this World, and follow them; and by Conſequence upon preparing for our Change, which may poſſibly be much nearer to ſome, or all of us, than we apprehend.

Euſeb. We cannot be too ſenſible of the Reaſon we all have, to look forward to another Life, and to get our Souls into a Readineſs for Death, which is the only Paſſage into it; and which if it ſhould ſeize us unprepar'd, we muſt look to have the Door eternally ſhut againſt us.

Servant. Will you pleaſe to walk in, my Maſter is extreamly weak; and if you had ſtay'd a little longer, you would hardly have found him alive.

Theoph. We came to that End; and I pray God we may find him in a Condition to be diſcourſed with.

Serv. His Underſtanding is ſound and well, but his Spirits ſink apace, ſo that it is but little you can expect him to ſay.

Theoph. Anchithanes, we are come now as we promis'd. Pray how are you to Day?

Anchithanes. Weak, very weak.

Euſeb. God be thanked you are yet alive; and like to be happy, I truſt, either in this, or the other World.

The ſick Man's Reſignation to the Divine Will.

Anchith. As it ſhall pleaſe God. I am in his Hand; and he orders all Things, and knows what is beſt for me. And whatſoever he ſhall determine concerning me, I ſhall think beſt.

Timoth.

Timoth. You judge, and ſpeak, as becomes a good Chriſtian. What Almighty God does, being always the Effect of infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, is always beſt. And it is therefore by much a prudenter and ſafer Courſe, to give our ſelves up to his Diſpoſal, than to chooſe for our ſelves, whatever the Caſe be.

Anchith. I am abundantly ſatisfied it is: And this makes me very eaſy. And I thank God, I do moſt heartily ſay for my ſelf, as *Eli* did upon *Samuel*'s heavy Meſſage to him; *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* 1 Sam. 3. 18. I am coming, O my God, prepare me, I beſeech thee, for the everlaſting Enjoyment of thee; that I may live with thee for ever, and eternally ſound forth thy Praiſes.

Philog. I truſt in God you will.

Anchith. I would gladly take Leave of my Family, and leave ſome parting Advice with them, before I am taken from them; and to that End have ſent for them in. But I find I muſt reſt a while, I am ſo much ſpent with that Little I have now ſaid.

Theoph. Very well moved! This being a Time when ſuch Advice is like to make the deepeſt Impreſſion upon them, and may not improbably be of everlaſting Advantage to them.

Euſeb. It is commonly obſerv'd, that the Words of dying Perſons have a particular Regard paid to them, above any Thing they had ſaid at other Times. *The Regard uſually paid to the Words of dying Men.*

Theoph. And there are divers Reaſons for it. For if a Man be ever ſerious and in earneſt, he will be ſo then; and if thoſe he ſpeaks to are ever diſpos'd to hearken to, and remember what he ſays, this is the Time, when they are juſt parting, and can hope for no farther

Communication with him; when they are deſirous of ſomething to remember him by, and of ſomething wherein to ſhew their Reſpect to his Memory; when his Words are a Sort of Legacies to thoſe that hear them, and they think themſelves oblig'd accordingly, preſently to reſolve to fulfil the Will of the Dead, and the Senſe they then have above other Times, of their own Mortality, makes them ſerious and ſincere in their Reſolutions.

Euſeb. For theſe Reaſons I cannot wholly diſlike *Achithanes*'s Deſign. But I think, however, he would do well to have a Regard to his own want of Strength, and be as ſhort as he can.

Theoph. That would be adviſeable; that he prejudice not himſelf by too much ſpeaking; for I find he is very weak.

Anchith. In truth I am ſo; and will therefore follow your Advice.

The ſick Man's Parting-Advice to his Family.

To his Wife. *You ſee my deareſt Wife, in what a Condition I lie here, looking continually to be taken from thee, my loving and dear Companion; and I truſt in God, it is in order to a better State, a State of incomparable Bliſs, and eternal Felicity. Wherefore I beg of thee, not to be griev'd upon my Account. I have run my Race, have finiſh'd my Years allotted me upon Earth; and do willingly quit this Life, in Obedience to the Divine Will, and in hope of thoſe ineſtimable Rewards, which are promis'd by the Goſpel, to all who duly labour after them. Neither be thou ſolicitous for thy ſelf and our dear Children; for thou knoweſt very well, that Almighty God has promis'd to take a particular Care of* the Fatherleſs and Widow, *and thou needeſt not doubt but he will make good his Word to thee, if thou ſtedfaſtly putteſt thy Truſt in him. There is nothing, I find, ſo hard for me to part with, as with thee, my dear, dear*

Pſal. 146. 9.

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Wife; however, ſince it is God's Will, I willingly leave thee. But yet I do it with a firm Perſwaſion, that thou wilt ſo proceed to order thy Life, in the Fear of God, that we may meet again, and be infinitely happy in the other World for evermore. Thou haſt been a very kind and loving Wife to me, and I have endeavour'd not to be wanting in return of Affection to thee. But if I have fail'd of my Duty, I heartily beg Pardon for it. Take Care of thy ſelf, that thou ſet the Lord always before thee, and walk always as in his Sight, and as remembring the Account thou muſt give to him at the laſt Day. Take Care of my Children to inſtruct them in their Duty, and to preſs them to obſerve it. Be a kind Miſtreſs to thy Servants. And ſet thy ſelf both to the Children and them a Pattern of good Works; that ſo thou mayſt have obedient Children, and faithful and orderly Servants, mayſt be beloved of God and all good Chriſtians, and that through the Mercy of God, and our bleſſed Saviour's Merits and Mediation, we may have a joyful Meeting in a happy Eternity.

To his Children. *God Almighty bleſs you all my dear Children, and make you his faithful and obedient Servants. Remember the Advice of your dying Father; obſerve it now, and keep it in Mind when I am gone. Be ſure to ſerve and pleaſe God. Get your ſelves well inſtructed in your Religion. And as you are happily Members of the beſt conſtituted Church now in the World, be ſure to continue always ſo, believing its Doctrines, and following its Directions. See that ye ſtedfaſtly retain the Faith taught in it from the holy Scriptures, and embrac'd and maintain'd through all the firſt and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity. And let your Practice always be accordingly. Remember God always ſees you, and do nothing that you would not have him privy to, or which you ſhall wiſh you had not done, when ye ſhall come at the laſt Day to give up your Accounts to him; nor*

to leave undone what you ſhall then wiſh you had performed. Be mindful of your Duty to him, and he will be mindful of you, will take you into his Protection, and will be an infinitely better Father to you than I could ever be. Fear him; love him; honour him; ſerve him; never omit your Prayers to him; praiſe him for all his Benefits; and in all Things ſtudy to approve your ſelves to him. Be conſtant in reading the holy Scriptures; and obſerve well what you read, to treaſure it up in your Minds, and practice it in your Lives. Avoid Idleneſs, and bad Company; and always aſſociate your ſelves with thoſe that are good. Put your Truſt always in God; and undertake nothing of any Moment, without firſt begging his Bleſſing upon it. Be ſure never to ſwear in your Converſation, nor to tell lies upon whatever Account. Be dutiful and loving to your kind and tender Mother. Pray for her. Honour her for God's ſake, who has requir'd it of you, for my ſake who am now leaving you, and for your own ſakes, that ſhe may not be forc'd at the laſt great Day, to appear as a Witneſs againſt you, and accuſe you of Diſobedience; and that God may bleſs you with a long and happy Life upon Earth, and with eternal Bliſs and Felicity in Heaven. And when ye come into the World, be juſt and honeſt in all your Dealings; courteous and obliging to all: helpful and charitable to all that need it; reſpectful to your Superiors; and thankful for any Kindneſſes that are done you. Shun all Exceſs in Meat and Drink, eſpecially in the latter. Moderate your Paſſions, forgive Injuries, love your Enemies, and do to all as ye would they ſhould do to you. Conſider it is but a little Time you have to live here, and let it therefore be your daily Care to provide for a better and more laſting State. Be good, and do your Duty in all Reſpects, and then God will love you, and as I ſaid before, will be the beſt of Fathers to you.

To

To his Servants. *The Time of my Departure being now at Hand, I ſent for you to take my Leave of you, and to give you my Parting-Advice, in hope you will attend to it, and remember, and practice it. I thank you for the good Services ye have done me. And I now deſire, that ſo long as any of you tarry here, ye will behave your ſelves in the ſame Manner towards your Miſtreſs. Be faithful, and diligent in your Service,* Obey her, *as the Apoſtle requires, not* with Eye-ſervice as Men-pleaſers, but in Singleneſs of Heart, fearing God. And whatſoever ye do *for her,* do it heartily, as *your Duty* to the Lord, and not to her *only*; knowing *that for ſo doing* ye ſhall receive of the Lord the Reward of *your Labours,* the Inheritance *of the Sons of God*; for *in this* ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt. *Flee all Stubbornneſs, Anſwering again, Lies, Pilfering, Waſtfulneſs, Idleneſs, Negligence, Breach of Truſt, Drunkenneſs, Fornication, Vain Oaths, Bad Company, or whatever is unbecoming the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity. Live always as in the Sight of God*; let him be your Fear, and let him be your Dread; *and be ſure above all Things never knowingly to offend him, that he may recompence you in Part here, and more abundantly hereafter.* I am very faint. Col. 3. 22, 23, 24.

Theoph. No wonder; for you have ſpoke beyond your Strength.

Anchith. I find I have. And yet I muſt proceed, to thank you all, my good Friends, for all your Kindneſs to me; for which I beſeech Almighty God to reward you plentifully; and *Theodorus* too, to whom pray give my parting Thanks. I can ſay no more. I am going. I pray God bleſs us all, and grant us a happy Meeting in Heaven. And ſo deareſt Wife, and all here preſent, *Adieu.* Pray to

God for me, when I can no longer pray for my ſelf.

Timoth. He ſeems to be going to ſleep.

Theoph. He is quite ſpent, and has need of Reſt; the Lord grant him it.

Euſeb. And when he ſhall be taken hence, the Lord grant him eternal Reſt.

All of them. Amen.

Theoph. What a Happineſs it is to die in the Fear of God, and as becomes a good Chriſtian! Death is in this Caſe a Deliverance from all our Cares and Troubles, Fears and Diſquietudes, Loſſes and Diſappointments, from all Pain and Sickneſs, and from all Sin and Wickedneſs, and a Tranſlation into the utmoſt Happineſs we are capable of enjoying, the Preſence and Fruition of God, the Society of our bleſſed Saviour, of the bleſſed Angels, and the Saints of all Ages, and all thoſe unconceivable Rewards, which are promiſed in the Goſpel, to ſuch as believe in Chriſt, and ſerve and obey him.

Euſeb. This is a Happineſs indeed! And in this happy State we may juſtly expect our good Friend will be in a very little Time, through the Merits and Mediation of Chriſt.

Timoth. And what a Comfort muſt it be to his deareſt Friends, that he ſhall be gone only into that Place of Glory, whither we all deſire to come in God's due Time!

Pſal. 116. 15.

Philog. *Right dear in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of his Saints,* ſays the Royal Pſalmiſt. And it is well ſaid by the Author of the Book of *Wiſdom,* to the ſame Purpoſe: *The Souls of the Righteous are in the Hand of God, and there ſhall no Torment touch them. In the Sight of the Unwiſe they ſeemed to die: And their Departure*

Wiſd. 3. 1, &c.

was

was taken for Miſery; and their going from us to be utter Deſtruction: But they are in Peace. For though they be puniſh'd in the Sight of Men; yet is their Hope full of Immortality. And having been a little chaſtiſed, they ſhall be greatly rewarded: For God proved them, and found them worthy for himſelf. As Gold in the Furnace hath he tried them, and received them as a Burnt-offering. And again, *The Righteous live for evermore, their Reward alſo is with the Lord, and the Care of them is with the moſt high. Therefore ſhall they receive a glorious Kingdom, and a beautiful Crown from the Lord's Hand; for with his right Hand ſhall he cover them, and with his Arm ſhall he protect them.* Wiſd. 5. 15, 16.

Theoph. Death is a dark Paſſage, but which brings to the Land of Light and Glory; a Night that ends in eternal Day; a Deliverance from all Evil, and the only Entrance into everlaſting Happineſs. I truſt it will be ſo to good *Anchithanes*; and I beſeech Almighty God it may; and to all of us, when our Time ſhall come.

Euſeb. God grant it to him, and all of us.

Timoth. Amen, Amen.

Theoph. Let us therefore prepare our ſelves for it, being *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; foraſmuch as we know that our Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*

Philog. This it highly concerns us all to be; and I hope we ſhall none of us neglect it, ſince we know of what dreadful Conſequence ſuch Neglect will certainly be.

Timoth. He begins to ſtir, ſee if he be not awake.

Theoph. How do you find your ſelf now *Anchithanes*? He makes no Anſwer; and by his Looks, I queſtion whether he will ever awake more in this World. For he ſeems to me to be in the Agony of Death. Pray *Philogeiton*, will you be ſo kind as to ſtep for *Theodorus*, and beg of him to come with all the Speed he can to finiſh his kind Offices to this good Man, by praying for him now at his Departure.

Philog. I go Sir, and will make all the Haſt I can.

Tim. Hold, Neighbour; you need not give your ſelf that Trouble; for *Theodorus* is coming up the Stairs.

Theod. Pray how does *Anchithanes*? I ſuppoſe drawing to his latter End.

Euſeb. He is ſo very near it, that we were juſt ſending to entreat your Aſſiſtance, that you would pleaſe to pray for him once more. And it is the laſt Trouble he is like to give you, till you come to place him in *his long Home*.

Theod. If you pleaſe then we will begin.

Theoph. He ſeems to be juſt at the Point of Death; ſo that you will hardly have Time for more than the Recommendatory Collect.

Theod. If you think ſo, I will uſe that.

The

The Recommendatory Collect.

O *Almighty God, with whom do live the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, after they are deliver'd from their earthly Priſons; We humbly commend the Soul of this thy Servant, our dear Brother, into thy Hands, as into the Hands of a faithful Creator, and moſt merciful Saviour; moſt humbly beſeeching thee, that it may be precious in thy Sight. Waſh it, we pray thee, in the Blood of that immaculate Lamb, that was ſlain to take away the Sins of the World; that whatſoever Defilements it may have contracted in the midſt of this miſerable and naughty World, through the Luſts of the Fleſh, or the Wiles of Satan, being purg'd and done away, it may be preſented pure, and without Spot before thee. And teach us, who ſurvive in this and other like daily Spectacles of Mortality, to ſee how frail and uncertain our own Condition is, and ſo to number our Days, that we may ſeriouſly apply our Hearts to that holy and heavenly wiſdom, whilſt we live here, which may in the End bring us to Life Everlaſting, through the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt thine only Son our Lord.* Amen.

Euſeb. Almighty God ſeems to have heard our Prayers, and taken him to himſelf.

Theod. Is he quite dead?

Timoth. Yes, Sir, he is.

Theod. He is deliver'd out of a miſerable, troubleſome World; and I doubt not, is in Happineſs. And I pray God prepare us all to follow him, that when our Time ſhall come, we may die as quietly and Chriſtianly as he has

has done, and be for ever happy, as I truſt he is.

Theoph. May we lay this Inſtance of our Mortality to Heart, and ſtudy to make a good Improvement of it.

Euſeb. That ſo we may *die the Death of the Righteous*, and our *laſt End* may *be like his.*

Theod. I will follow the poor afflicted Gentlewoman, and try to comfort her under this her ſad Loſs; which I fear lies heavy upon her, conſidering how loving and tender a Husband ſhe has parted with.

Theoph. Be pleas'd to aſſure her, we are all Partakers in her Affliction; and do beſeech Almighty God to ſupport her under it, and to ſanctify it to her.

Euſeb. We can do no Service, I believe, by ſtaying.

Timoth. And I ſhall be wanted at home.

Theoph. Therefore we had beſt be going.

Philog. If you pleaſe.

Theoph. Who would have thought but Three Weeks ſince, that our good Friend ſhould have been taken from us by this Time. But ſo it has pleas'd God, who does nothing but with the greateſt Wiſdom and Equity, and whoſe Will is therefore always beſt.

Philog. This ſhews how little Dependance there is upon this Life, even when in our perfecteſt Health and greateſt Strength.

Timoth. We ſee by this Inſtance, how eaſily the moſt * athletick Conſtitution is overcome by Sickneſs; and that were we not liable to Mul-

* Quis eſt tam Stultus (quamvis ſit Adoleſcens) cui ſit exploratum ſe ad veſperam eſſe victurum? *Cic.* de Senect.

titudes

titudes of outward unforeſeen Accidents, beſides many inward latent Diſtempers, each of which may eaſily diſpatch us; were we not liable to theſe quicker Means of diſpatching us out of the World, yet could we have no Security of our Lives, when we ſee one ready to be laid in the Earth, who not many Days ſince, was, to all Appearance, as ſtrong and healthy, and as like to live to a good old Age, as any one of us. God grant we may all make a good Uſe of it. But my Way lies here.

Philog. And mine too. So that we muſt both beg your Excuſe that we do not wait upon you farther.

Theoph. I heartily wiſh you a good Night, Neighbours, and thank you for your good Company hither.

Euſeb. A good Night to you both, after this mournful Providence. God ſend us a happy Meeting, where Death ſhall be no more.

Theoph. Death indeed were a very melancholick Scene, did it put an End to our Being. But it is the great Benefit of Chriſtianity, and the good Man finds it a ſingular Defence againſt the Fear of Death, that *Life and Immortality is brought to light by the Goſpel.* 2 Tim. 1. 10.

Euſeb. It is now more evident and indiſputable than it was before. But the World had a Notion of it before; the *Jews* were taught it, and the Gentiles had an Expectation of a future State.

Theoph. The *Jews*, it is true, were taught to expect another Life after this, as is plain from the laſt Words of *Eccleſiaſtes. Let us hear the Concluſion of the whole Matter. Fear God, and keep his Commandments,* כי זה כל האדם *for this is the whole of Man*, or *every Man*; or as the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt renders it, *This ought to be every* Eccleſ. 12. 13, 14.

every Man's Way; to the ſame Purpoſe with our *Engliſh* Tranſlation, *This is the whole Duty of Man. For God ſhall bring every Work to Judgment, with every ſecret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* As likewiſe from ſeveral Paſſages in the Book of **Wiſdom*, and the Son of *Syrach*, and from the Relation of the Mother and her Seven Children in the Story of the †*Maccabees, who were tortur'd, not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain the better Reſurrection.* And the Gentiles too had ſome Notion of another Life, and of its Rewards and Puniſhments, as appears not only from the Fictions of the Poets, accommodated to the more uſual Opinion in this Reſpect; but from divers Sayings of their graver and more ſerious Philoſophers, (*a*) *Socrates*, (*b*) *Cato*, (*b*) *Tully*, (*d*) and others. Yet all the Intimations, not only theſe, but the *Jews* alſo, had of a future State, were obſcure and unſatisfactory, in Compariſon of the far clearer Revelations of the Goſpel in this Reſpect. So that however any, before our Saviour's Incarnation, might be tempted to ſuſpect, leſt their Souls ſhould live no longer, when once the Body is dead; thoſe Chriſtians muſt be wilfully blind, that ſhall ſuffer themſelves now in the leaſt to doubt of it.

* Wiſd. 3. 1, &c. & 5. 15, 16. Eccluſ. 18. 10. & 21, 2, 10. & 41. 10.

† 2 Macc. 7. 1, —36.

(*a*) Plat. Socrat. Apol. c. 21, 22. & Phæd. c. 7, & 14, &c. Cic. de Amicitia & de Conſolat.

(*b*) Cic. de Senect.

(*c*) Ibid.

(*d*) Diog. Laert. in Vit. Thaletis. Cic. de Amic. Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 1. p. 303. & l. 5. p. 548. Lactant. Inſtit. l. 7. c. 7. Macrob. Somn. Scip. l. 2. c. 13. Porphyrii Sentent.

Euſeb.

Euſeb. This is undeniably manifeſt from our Saviour's Life, and Sufferings, and Death, which had all been uſeleſs and to no Purpoſe, if there were to be no other Life after this.

Theoph. True. He came to redeem us from eternal Torments, and to purchaſe for us eternal Life. And therefore, ſays St. *John*, *This is the Record, that he hath given to us eternal Life; and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath Life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life.* 1 St. Joh. 5. 11, 12.

Euſeb. This is moreover indiſputably evident from thoſe Words of our Saviour, which are the Concluſion of the Account he gives us of the laſt Judgment; *Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment; but the Righteous into Life eternal.* St. Mat. 25. 46.

Euſeb. There are alſo divers other moſt expreſs Declarations to this Purpoſe, in the New Teſtament.

Theoph. Yes, a great many. Our bleſſed Saviour promiſes, that they *who have forſaken Houſes, or Brethren, or Siſters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for his Name's ſake, ſhall receive an hundredfold, and ſhall inherit everlaſting Life.* St. Mat. 19. 29. As he had but a little before, in the ſame Chapter, given this Advice to the young Man, who came to him for Direction in order to Salvation; *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.* Ver. 17. And that this Life was ſuch as was to endure for evermore, appears from the Queſtion put, in the Verſe immediately foregoing, *Good Maſter, what good Thing ſhall I do, that I may have eternal Life?* Ver. 16. For though our Saviour mentions only Life in general, yet his Anſwer being given in relation to the preceding Queſtion, the

Life

Life here ſpoken of muſt be the ſame in both Verſes; and by conſequence the latter as well as the former muſt mean *Eternal* Life. Conſonantly whereto St. *Paul* ſpeaking of our Saviour's coming to judge the World, expreſſes himſelf on this Manner, *The Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God; and the Dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt: Then we which are alive, and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air; and ſo ſhall be,* not for a little Time, or a ſet Number of Years, but *EVER with the Lord.* And St. *Peter* exhorting the *Elders,* whether Biſhops, or Presbyters, carefully to *feed the Flock of Chriſt,* enforces his Exhortation with this encouraging Proſpect, namely, that *When the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away;* and which muſt therefore laſt for ever and ever. And many other Places there are to the ſame Effect in the New Teſtament, which I forbear to recite.

1 Theſ. 4. 16, 17.

1 St. Pet. 5. 4.

Euſeb. You need not; for theſe are ſo clear and full to the Purpoſe, that nothing can be more.

Theoph. But this is not all our Happineſs; but our Bodies ſhall alſo be raiſed again at the End of the World, and reunited to their former Souls, that ſo the whole Man may glorify God, and be for ever happy with him.

Euſeb. St. *Paul* delivers it, not only as a certain, but as a known and undoubted Truth; *We know,* ſays he, *that if our earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolv'd, we have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

2 Cor. 5. 1.

Theoph. And at another Time he declares it to be the Hope and Expectation, and the great Encouragement of Chriſtians, to have their Bodies, not only raiſed, but refined and purified, that they may be fit Receptacles for glorified Souls. *We look for the Saviour the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Who ſhall change our vile Body, that it may be faſhion'd like to his glorious Body, by the mighty Power, whereby he is able even to ſubdue all Things to himſelf.* Phil. 3. 20, 21.

Euſeb. How comfortable is this!

Theoph. A mighty Comfort certainly! To think, that though we die and have our Bodies laid in the Grave, they ſhall not always remain there; but we ſhall be *like God* in our Souls, and have our Bodies faſhion'd like our bleſſed Saviour's glorified Body; and ſo ſhall be infinitely more happy, than we can at preſent expreſs, or conceive. 1 St. Joh. 3. 2. 1 Cor. 2. 9.

Euſeb. God grant it to you, and me.

Theoph. So I pray too. But yet never doubt it, if we be but qualified for ſo great and ineſtimable a Bleſſedneſs. And let this therefore be our continual Care, to *work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, to *lay up to our ſelves Treaſures in Heaven*, and to *paſs the Time of our Sojourning here, in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs*, that ſo we may not only eaſily and readily leave this Life, whenever we ſhall be called out of it, but dying in the Faith and Fear of God, *may have an Entrance miniſtred unto us abundantly, into the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

Euſeb. Amen.

Theoph. *And the very God of Peace ſanctify us wholly: And I pray God our whole Spirit, and Soul and Body, be preſerv'd Blameleſs, unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 1 Theſ. 5. 23.

Euſeb. Amen.

Theoph.

Theoph. We have now done all the Service we can to our good Neighbour now with God; unleſs it be to attend his Body to the Grave. And I preſume you will not fail of doing that laſt Office for him.

Euſeb. God willing I ſhall be there.

1 Theſ. 4. 13. *Theoph.* Though we are forbid to *ſorrow as Men without Hope, for them that ſleep* in Chriſt; yet is a decent Regard to the Remains of our deceaſed Friends, what has been always thought requiſite. Eccleſ. 12. 5. *Man,* ſaith *Solomon, goeth to his long Home, and the Mourners go about the Streets.* And I would not be wanting to pay this laſt Reſpect to our good Neighbour; and to join with the Congregation, in *giving Thanks, for that it hath pleaſed God to deliver that our Brother out of the Miſeries of this ſinful World; and beſeeching that of his gracious Goodneſs it may pleaſe him ſhortly to accompliſh the Number of his Elect, and to haſten his Kingdom; that we, with all thoſe who are departed in the true Faith of his holy Name, may have our perfect Conſummation and Bliſs, both in Body and Soul, in his eternal and everlaſting Glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

Theoph. And may the Almighty vouchſafe to hear you, and all of us; and to grant that we may meet with good *Anchithanes* in the Kingdom of Heaven, and be for ever happy with him thro' the ſame our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Euſeb. Amen.

Theoph. I heartily thank you, *Euſebius,* for your good Company; and wiſh you a good Night.

Euſeb. I humbly thank you, *Theophilus,* for the Benefit I have had by your Converſation; and wiſh you alſo a good Night.

The End of the Laſt VISIT.

SOME FEW

MEDITATIONS

USEFUL

At all Times,

But more especially in the Time of

SICKNESS;

Whereby to excite to the more diligent

Preparation for Death.

Commune with your own Heart in your Chamber, and be still. Psal. 4. 4.

Meditatio siquidem parit Scientiam; Scientia Compunctionem; Compunctio Devotionem: Devotio perficit Orationem. *B. August de Spiritu & Anima. c.* 50.

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SOME FEW

MEDITATIONS

USEFUL

At all Times,

But more especially in the Time of

SICKNESS;

Whereby to excite to the more diligent

Preparation for Death.

SOME SHORT Meditations, &c.

THERE is nothing in the Word of God, none of the Revelations he has thought fit to make to Mankind, that does not well deserve each ones frequent Consideration. And therefore it were easy to furnish out a large Catalogue of Particulars, as some have done, not only for every Month, or Week, but for every Day in the Year. But not being willing to burden the sick Man with too great a Number of Subjects for his serious Thoughts, at a Season when his Faculties perhaps are much impair'd, or at least so taken up with his Sickness, that he can think on little else for any Time together, I have therefore chosen to mention only a few, leaving him either to enlarge upon them in his Meditations, or to add to them, if he find himself able, and shall see Occasion for it.

I.

The Vanity, Insufficiency, and Transitoriness of all Earthly Enjoyments.

I Easily see, that these Temporal Enjoyments are great Blessings, when all Things else concur to promote our Welfare, and we are mindful to make such use of them, as that they may not obstruct, but promote our eternal Salvation; when God gives them in Mercy, and the Possessor uses them with Caution, Gratitude, and Charity, to the Donor's Glory, and the Supply of his own and others Necessities,

not in Luxury or Extravagance, to gratify his own Lusts, or oppress his meaner Neighbours; and whilst he suffers not the Love of them, to make him in any wise regardless of his Duty at present, or of another Life hereafter. Which if they at any Time do, they are sore Judgments, and to be looked upon as such, and there is no Cause to rejoice in the Attainment, or other Possession of them. In this Case it may be said of them, as of the strange Woman in the *Proverbs*, *They have cast down many wounded: Yea, many strong Men have been slain by them. Their House*, the Place where they are to be had, *is the Way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death.*

Prov. 7. 26, 27.

But setting aside this most weighty Consideration, and looking upon them only as they are in themselves, and with regard only to this present Life, and the Conveniences of it, they by no Means deserve to be made the chief End of any Man's Studies and Endeavours; but especially not of a Christian's, who has infinitely more desirable Rewards offer'd him, if he will but be perswaded diligently to seek after them. Such an one should never suffer himself to set his Affections, upon what perhaps he has no Need of, or it may be will serve but to encrease his Cares.

For alas! All the Privileges and Possessions of this World, are even in their most gaudy Appearance, and with their greatest Advantages, but as * *Hipparchus* the *Pythagorean* pronounces concerning them, ἄστατα καὶ ἀβέβαια, fading and unstable, transitory and very uncertain. For supposing a Man not to miscarry

* Galei Fragm. Pythag. p. 12.

in

in his Purſuit after them, as Thouſands continually do, but to ſucceed in his Attempts, and obtain his Full of all that he can deſire; yet after all it is daily ſeen, that thoſe who are moſt fortunate in this Reſpect, do not always enjoy themſelves moſt. Let them have ever ſo large a Portion of Wealth, Honour, or Power, they do not ſleep the better for it, but perhaps the worſe; nor are their Bodies the leſs obnoxious to Diſeaſes, but it may be the more; nor their Minds freer from Troubles and Vexations.

Or did ever ſo great Satisfaction ariſe from theſe Temporal good Things, yet muſt this neceſſarily be of ſhort Duration; at moſt but for this uncertain Life, poſſibly but for a very little Part of it. * He that to Day ſtruts in his gorgeous Attire, looks big, lives high, and glories moſt in his peculiar Happineſs above his Neighbours; knows not yet to what an Ebb the Morrow may reduce him, and how much more miſerable he may come to be, than thoſe whom he moſt deſpiſes. How many have I my ſelf known, and how many more have I heard or read of, who have been ſuddenly cut off in the midſt of their Mirth and Jollity, and when deſigning to enlarge their Treaſuries, and to ſolace themſelves with the beloved Fruits of their Labours, have been, unexpectedly ſtripped of their dearer Enjoyments, being preſently impoveriſh'd by Fire, by Water, by Tempeſts, by Loſſes abroad, or by Treachery at home, by their own Imprudence, or ill Management of their Affairs, or

* Unuſq; Titan vidit, atq; unuſq; Dies ſtantem & cadentem. *Sen. Herc. Oet. v.* 433.

by a ſecret Curſe of God going along with what either their Anceſtors, or themſelves had unjuſtly gotten? And have I not ſeen, or heard of others, whoſe Indiſpoſition of Body, or Uneaſineſs of Mind; a diſorder'd Underſtanding, or a guilty Conſcience; the Enmity of others, or their own ungovernable Avarice or Ambition; a luſtful Manner of Life, or a certain Peeviſhneſs of Temper; or ſome other the like unhappy Cauſe has made miſerable in the midſt of the greateſt Plenty? Riches and Satisfaction do not always dwell together. But had I ever ſo copious an Affluence of the one, it were no Impoſſibility for me to want the other; and ſo to be ſtill unhappy to a great Degree.

Or again, if I could ſuppoſe my ſelf, which is not reaſonably to be ſuppos'd; could I ſuppoſe my ſelf, I ſay, to have all the Satisfaction I could deſire from theſe worldly Advantages, yet am I to remember that it is only in this World that I can hope for the Enjoyment of them. When *Lucian* fancies that **Menippus* muſt firſt lay aſide his Staff and Pouch, *Charmoleus* his Beauty, *Lampichus* his Robes and Diadem, *Damaſias* his Crowns, *Crato* his Dignities, the Philoſopher his Beard, and the Rhetorician his Eloquence, before *Charon* would admit them into his Boat, he does but ingeniouſly deſcribe the wretched State, of thoſe who have nothing better than theſe fading Enjoyments to truſt to at their Death; inaſmuch as whatever their Poſſeſſions be here, they muſt be ſure to leave them all behind them. They can *carry nothing away with them when they die; neither*

* Char. & Merc. inter Mortuorum Dialogos.

ſhall their Pomp follow them. The greateſt Prince, the moſt honourable Potentate, ſhall have no Advantage in the other World above the meaneſt Peaſant, but every one ſhall there be rewarded according to his Doings in this Life, not according to what he had poſſeſs'd in it. He will then find himſelf ſtripped of all he had moſt valued himſelf upon here. And in the mean Time it is eaſy to obſerve, how all his earthly Enjoyments are both uncertain and unſatisfactory, and ſo can never make him truly happy; and by conſequence he muſt have made a very dear Bargain for himſelf, though he had *gained the whole World*, if at laſt *he loſe his* immortal *Soul* by it. St. Mat. 16. 26.

And if the whole World, with all its Advantages, were too mean a Price for a Soul, can I poſſibly be ſo ſtupidly in love with it, as to forfeit my Soul, and ruin my ſelf to all Eternity, for ſo inconſiderable an Intereſt in it, as I can ever hope will fall to my Share? What an unaccountable Folly and Madneſs is this? And how can I poſſibly find in my Heart to enſlave my ſelf, to what muſt by this Means prove my inevitable Deſtruction? No, I will be wiſer; I will conſider my latter End; I will weigh with my ſelf the Vanity of all temporal good Things, will look upon my ſelf as only *a Stranger and Pilgrim upon Earth*, and uſe them only as the Accommodations I meet with in my Inn; whilſt my Heart is ſet upon my Journey's End, my heavenly Father's Houſe, whither I am travelling, and thoſe more tranſcendently valuable Rewards, which are prepar'd there for his true and faithful Diſciples. I will reckon my ſelf only as a Sojourner here below, and though I will not

with the ancient * *Encratites* and *Apotactick*s, ſenſeleſly deprive my ſelf of the Uſe of what temporal Bleſſings God is pleas'd to beſtow upon me; I will not ſuffer my ſelf to be brought into Subjection to them, nor ſo place my Affections upon any of them, as not readily to part with them whenſoever they ſhall be called for. And will endeavour to *make to my ſelf* ſuch *Friends of this Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs, as that when I fail,* and am to continue no longer here, *they may receive me into everlaſting Habitations.*

St. Luke 16. 9.

II.

The Relation we ſtand in to Almighty God, the Duty we owe him, and the Knowledge he hath of all our Actions.

AS I received my Being from God, and have my whole Dependance upon him, I muſt needs be ſenſible, that all the Duty I can poſſibly pay him, is no more; no more, did I ſay? It is incomparably leſs, than what my Relation to him, and the Bleſſings I have receiv'd from him require of me. I can never be too careful to pleaſe him, though I be ever ſo intent upon his Service, and though I watch Day and Night with all the Diligence poſſible, that I be not any Way drawn to offend him. He is our Lord and Creator, we are his

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 2. c. 17. Epiphan. Hæreſ. 61. S. Aug. de Hæreſibus.

Creatures and Subjects. He has abſolute Sovereignty and Dominion over us; and as we are accountable to him *only* for what we do, ſo are we accountable to him for *ALL* we do, and muſt expect that he will moſt certainly reward, or puniſh us everlaſtingly, according as we either approve our ſelves to, or diſobey him. He *is our Lawgiver, our Judge, and our King*, who alone has the Right to demand of me, and all Mankind, whatſoever ſhall ſeem well-pleaſing to him; and we muſt leave our ſelves without all Excuſe, if we do not indefatigably labour to anſwer our Obligation. Think therefore, O my Soul; what exceſſive Guilt muſt I neceſſarily contract, and to what intolerable Vengeance do I juſtly expoſe my ſelf, by every Act of wilful Diſobedience? If it be a heinous Crime to offend an earthly Prince, of the ſame mortal Conſtitution with my ſelf; a Fellow-Creature, who though advanced far above me in the World, can no more ſubſiſt of himſelf, than I can; who depends wholly for both his Being, and Well-being, upon God's good Providence, as much as I, and who ſhall as certainly give up the Ghoſt and die, and be afterwards brought to Judgment as I; if it be ſuch a heinous Crime to offend ſuch a Prince, how much more heinous muſt it be to offend the great and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords? And how can I anſwer it to my own Conſcience? Or what can I think will become of me, if I allow my ſelf to do it? He will not fail to *render to every Man according to his Deeds: To them who by patient Continuance in well-doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life: But to them who are contentious, and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs,*

Iſa. 33. 22.

Rom. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9.

teouſneſs, *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh, upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil.* And by conſequence it is not only ſhameful and highly misbecoming, to behave my ſelf undutifully towards him; but it is unconceivably dangerous, and the readieſt Way I can take to render my ſelf for ever miſerable. It was not to gratify my unreaſonable Luſts and Paſſions, and lead as ſenſual Lives as the brute Beaſts, which have no Underſtanding, not to ſeek after preſent periſhing Enjoyments, nor to ſpend our Days in carnal Pleaſures and Delights, that we came into this World; but to

Phil. 2. 12. *work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling,* to make Proviſion for a future State, and prepare our ſelves by a truly Chriſtian Converſation, for the perpetual Fruition of God in the higheſt Heavens. And nothing can be more Contradictory to this great End of my Being, than to indulge my ſelf in any Sort of

Rom. 2. 5. Wickedneſs; and thereby *treaſure up Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.*

Nor is there any Hope of Eſcape if I do ſo. For as God is juſt, and will not fail to avenge himſelf upon Sinners; ſo is his Eye continually upon each one, to obſerve his Do-

Phil. 1. 27. ings, whether his *Converſation be, as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt,* or whether he takes Liberty to tranſgreſs his Duty, and expoſe himſelf to all the Tortures threaten'd to thoſe that do ſo. He is every where preſent; *neither is there* any Action, any Word, any Thought or Deſire,

Prov. 15. 3. *that is not manifeſt in his Sight; His Eyes are in every Place beholding the Evil and the Good.* Whereever I am, or howſoever employ'd, I am ſure to be under his Inſpection; who ſees me, and all my Doings, though I ſee not him. I can

conceal

conceal nothing from him; not the moſt ſecret Inclinations of my Heart. And what great Need have I therefore, to be very cautious what I do, that it may be what he will approve of? Dare I take upon me to provoke him to his Face? If I dare, the Conſequence of ſuch Preſumption muſt be very terrible, and muſt leave me without all Excuſe, when I come at the laſt Day to appear before his Tribunal. And if I dare not, why do I ever give Way to any Temptation, ſeeing I know beforehand, that ſuch Compliance, how private ſoever, can no more be hid from his Omniſcience, than if it had been publickly proclaimed on the Houſe-Top. He knows how to *bring to Light the hidden Things of Darkneſs, and make manifeſt the Counſels of the Heart*; and there is no impoſing upon him in any reſpect. And if this Conſideration cannot make me diligently watchful over my ſelf, and holy and upright in all my Ways, it is impoſſible that any other ſhould ever do it.

1 Cor. 4. 5.

III. *The*

III.

The infinite Mercy and Goodneſs of God to Sinners.

BEſides the Authority of God over all, and the Knowledge he has of all our Ways, his unſpeakable Mercy, and moſt gracious Condeſcenſion, is another powerful Diſſwaſive from Vice, and well worthy of my ſerious Conſideration as ſuch. His abundant Goodneſs to Sinners, throughout the whole Courſe of their Lives, the Bleſſings he heaps upon us in this World, and the far greater he has promis'd in the other; and above all, the ineſtimable Price that was paid for our Redemption, are an indiſpenſable Obligation to make his Glory the Aim, and Deſign of all my Actions. And indeed, who would not be immediately raviſh'd into an Extaſy of Love, at the Meditation of thoſe tranſporting Bowels, of Pity and Commiſeration, which could prevail with Almighty God, not only to create us Subjects capable of enjoying his Favour; but when we had juſtly depriv'd our ſelves of all Pretence to it, by our Diſobedience and Rebellion, even yet to ſeek our Salvation, and reſtore us to his Love, though it were by the Death of his only begotten and dearly beloved Son? Who would not hereupon be ſeiz'd with the moſt profound Admiration, of the Height, and Breadth, and Length, and Depth, the unfathomable Dimenſions of this Love of God in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord? And how unaccountably do I behave my ſelf, if I will not yet

be perſwaded, to live as one intirely devoted to his Service, after all the Experience I have had, of his abundant, though every Way undeſerved Lovingkindneſs?

What more endearing Courſe is it poſſible that God could have taken to bring Sinners to himſelf, and their own Happineſs, than in ſpight of all their Undutifulneſs, and Ingratitude towards him, nevertheleſs to purchaſe them at ſo wonderful a Price? How could he more emphatically expreſs his Tenderneſs of Affection to us, and earneſt Deſire of our Welfare, than by thus giving the ever bleſſed Jeſus to ſuffer in our ſtead? Could our Redemption have been brought about upon any other eaſier Terms, it had been infinite Condeſcenſion in God to have been reconcileable to us, upon our moſt importunate Entreaties, and deepeſt Humiliation? But that the Reconciliation ſhould begin on his Part; that when he *ſaw us polluted in our Blood*, he ſhould yet *ſay unto us, Live*, that whilſt we were Enemies and Rebels, he ſhould not only offer us a Pardon, but ſhould contrive a Means of Recovery for us, that it could never have enter'd into the Heart of Men or Angels to imagine; that God ſhould thus become Man, the Creator of all Things ſhould be *made of a Woman*, the King of the whole World ſhould vouchſafe to ſuffer upon the Croſs, for the ſake of his obſtinately diſobedient Subjects; This is ſuch exceſſive aſtoniſhing Compaſſion, as were enough to melt a Heart of Flint; and muſt render Chriſtians the moſt deſpicable Creatures in the World, if they can yet allow themſelves to perſiſt in their Diſobedience. Thoſe temporal Benefits we all daily and hourly partake of, call for an humble Acknowledgment, and Ezek. 16. 6.

and the beſt Services in our Power, as a juſt Return for them. Yet all theſe heap'd one upon another, are as nothing, if compar'd with the infinite Love manifeſted in our Saviour's Sufferings, and the many ſpiritual Bleſſings we enjoy through him. And can I now find in my Heart to ſlight ſuch amazing Condeſcenſion? Can I forbear contriving by all Ways imaginable to proclaim my unfeigned Gratitude for it? Oh what Love! What Pity is this! What an exceſſive Load of Miſeries do I deſerve, if I can yet neglect and undervalue it? And how unconceivably happy ſhall I be to all Eternity, if I but take Care to make a right Uſe of it? I will therefore embrace it with a Heart full of Joy; will inceſſantly bleſs and praiſe the moſt merciful Author; and will make it my daily Study never to forget it, nor to behave my ſelf unagreeably to the Remembrance of ſo ineſtimable a Ranſom paid for me.

IV.

The Covenant we enter'd into at Baptiſm.

IF God's abſolute Authority over me, and his unſpeakable Goodneſs to me, be ſtrong Inducements to a conſcientious Obſervance of what is well-pleaſing in his Sight; ſo likewiſe is the Conſideration of the Covenant wherein-to I enter'd, when I was made a Member of Chriſt by Baptiſm. As this holy Ordinance was appointed, for my Admiſſion into the Chriſtian Church, and for capacitating me to partake of the ineſtimable Benefits of my Saviour's Death and Paſſion; ſo did I then promiſe

promiſe and vow on the other Hand to fight manfully under my Saviour's Banner, *againſt* the Temptations of *the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, and to remain Chriſt's faithful Soldier, and Servant, unto my Life's End.* The Thought whereof ſhould ſublimate my Mind and Manners, and fill my Soul with a holy Indignation, againſt all unworthy Actions, and make me vigorous and unwearied in well-doing, as I would not break my Contract, and incur the Guilt of Diſhoneſty and Apoſtacy, and expoſe my ſelf to all the heavy Judgments, threatened in the Goſpel to the Refractary and Diſobedient. Baptiſm, as I ſaid, is an initiating Ordinance, and gives a Right to mighty Privileges and Benefits; but all this is only on Condition, and if that Condition be not faithfully perform'd, it will but add to the Severity of my Condemnation. There is a plain Stipulation in it, as appears from the Inſtitution, and from all the Forms of it; and particularly from our own, wherein the Perſon to be baptized expreſly promiſes to *renounce the Devil and all his Works, and conſtantly believe God's holy Word, and obediently to keep his Commandments.* St. Mat. 28. 20. And what egregious Wickedneſs and Treachery muſt it be, to *ſtart back when we have thus put our Hand to the Plough?* St. Luke 9. 62. And how muſt it unfit us *for the Kingdom of Heaven?* We have taken Chriſt's Livery upon us, and have bound our ſelves, and by a ſolemn military Oath, to be true and faithful to him. This is the Caſe of all that have given up their Names to him in this holy Sacrament; and of my ſelf in particular. And it is out of my Power therefore to retreat and take Part with the Enemy, without becoming a perjur'd faithleſs Wretch, like

like a Soldier forſaking his Colours, throwing away his Weapons, and running from his Captain. This will make all my Sins far more provoking than they would otherwiſe have been, adding to their own intrinſick Guilt, that of Perfidiouſneſs and Breach of Vow, and ſo, unleſs prevented by a timely and ſincere Repentance, will conſign me over to ſo much the ſadder Share of Tortures in the other World. And what can awaken my drowſy Conſcience, and put me upon conſulting my own Safety, if this will not? I muſt be a dreadfully hardened Sinner, if I can reſolve to break through ſo powerful an Obſtruction, to come at everlaſting Miſery. I will therefore call my ſelf forthwith to an Account, and ſee wherein I have broken my Faith thus ratified; and will take Care to walk more circumſpectly for the future, that my Converſation may teſtify in my Behalf, that I am not unmindful of the Profeſſion I have taken upon me, and the ſolemn Obligation I then enter'd into to live according to its Rules. I will remember that I am a Chriſtian, baptiz'd into the Church, and entitled to the Bleſſings of the Goſpel, provided I live according to its Precepts; but withal, that unleſs I do this, I am in a far worſe Condition, than if I had never heard one Word of Chriſtianity.

V. *The*

V.

The Multitude and Heinouſneſs of our Sins.

IF I turn my Eyes from the Obligations that lie upon me, to the Courſe of my paſt Converſation, and ſee how negligent I have been, and how horrid, and how frequent my Provocations, here I preſently meet with ſufficient Matter of melancholick and moſt penſive Meditation. Nor need I any more diſmal Contemplation, to humble me before Almighty God, and force me to fly to him for Mercy. It was the Royal Pſalmiſt's Complaint, that his *Iniquities were gone over his Head, and as a ſore Burden were too heavy for him to bear.* And again, *Mine Iniquities have taken hold upon me, ſo that I am not able to look up; they are more in Number than the Hairs of my Head, and my Heart hath failed me.* And all pious Souls ſee too juſt Reaſon to break forth, in like Manner, into the open Acknowledgment of their own Unworthineſs, and Demerits, whenſoever they call to Mind the Multitude and Heinouſneſs of thoſe Sins, whereof they are conſcious to themſelves. Pſal. 38. 4. Pſal. 40. 12.

As to the Number of our Sins, they are too many to be caſt up; though we ever ſo deliberately ſet about it. Our Sins of Omiſſion, and our Sins of Commiſſion, our wilful Sins, and thoſe whereinto we are often betray'd through Inadvertency, or Weakneſs, the Sins of our Inclination, of our Company, of our Employment, of the Times we live in, our

ſecret and conceal'd, and our publick and moſt ſcandalous Sins, the Sins we remember, and thoſe we have forgotten, or had never taken Notice of; the Sins of our Devotions, of our Recreations, of our Meals and our other Entertainments, of our Exceſs, and of our Parſimony, of our Modeſty, and of our Aſſurance, of our Diffidence, and of our Preſumption, our later and our former Sins, thoſe of our Childhood, of our Youth, and of our riper Years, in Thought, Word, and Deed, againſt our God, againſt our Neighbours, and againſt our own ſelves; there is ſuch a Maſs of them, that the leaſt Reflection upon it may well put our Minds into the utmoſt Confuſion, and were it not for the infinite Mercy of God through Chriſt, muſt inevitably have lodg'd us long ago in Hell. How muſt the Recollection of ſuch a Load of Guilt lie heavy upon the Soul of every good Man, and make him lament and bewail his Folly, and try by all Means poſſible to obtain the Favour of God, and his Pardon and Forgiveneſs? And what an abandon'd Sinner muſt I be, if I be not wofully terrified at the Appearance of ſo horrid a Spectacle, and do not fully reſolve that *I will not ſuffer mine Eyes to ſleep, nor mine Eye-lids to ſlumber, neither the Temples of my Head to take any Reſt*, until I ſhall have endeavour'd to make my Peace with God, by a hearty Sorrow and true Repentance, for all my Miſcarriages, and a full Purpoſe of Heart to ſerve him truly for the remaining Part of my Life? They who never *call their own Ways to Remembrance*, will not much concern themſelves *to turn their Feet unto God's Teſtimonies*; but there is none who is duly ſenſible of the Guilt he has contracted, or that frequently

frequently ſets apart ſome Time, to enquire into the Nature of his Duty, and his manifold Tranſgreſſions of it, notwithſtanding all the Obligations he is under to the contrary, but muſt be ſeiz'd with a dreadful Apprehenſion, of the great Need he has of God's Mercy, and the wretched State he muſt neceſſarily be in without it.

Nor are we chargeable only with Multitudes of Sins, the leaſt of which, were it not for the infinite Mercy of God in Chriſt Jeſus, would ſink us into the Pit of Deſtruction; but they are alſo many Times attended with ſeveral notorious Aggravations, having been committed perhaps upon Deliberation, againſt the Checks of Conſcience, and clear Dictates of the Underſtanding, againſt numerous Calls and Invitations to Obedience, againſt Promiſes and Threatnings, Mercies and Judgments, after Vows and Reſolutions to the contrary, and often repeated, if not become habitual. So that we have all great Cauſe to bluſh, and be aſham'd to look up to Heaven, and *to loath our ſelves for the Evils we have committed in all our Abominations.* Our whole Life is full of Vanity and Naughtineſs; and if thou, O God, ſhould'ſt reſolve to *enter into Judgment with thy Servants, and ſhould'ſt be extream to mark what were done amiſs,* not the very beſt of us could hope to *be juſtified in thy Sight.* *Thou art of purer Eyes, than to behold Evil, and can'ſt not look upon Iniquity*; *all* whoſe *Ways are Judgment: A God of Truth, and without Iniquity, juſt and right art thou.* *Thou art not a God that hath Pleaſure in Wickedneſs: Neither ſhall Evil dwell with thee. The Fooliſh ſhall not ſtand in thy Sight: Thou hateſt all the Workers of Iniquity.* And yet, alas! How have all been forgetful of thee? From the

Pſal. 143. 2.

Habak. 1. 13.

Deut. 32. 4.

Pſal. 5. 4, 5.

higheſt to the loweſt there is none Righteous before thee, none that has not juſtly deſerved thy Wrath and implacable Indignation. The moſt religiouſly diſpos'd cannot but diſcover numerous Failings and Imperfections, beſides other more wilful Tranſgreſſions of their Duty, enough to ſtrike them to the Heart, at every Remembrance of them. Much more may others fear leſt a heavy Doom befal them, by reaſon of thoſe more heinous Enormities, which every where diſcover themſelves throughout the whole Courſe of their Converſations. If they that have been moſt obſervant of God's Laws, have yet need of his Mercy and Favour to be extended to them, or otherwiſe they cannot be happy, how much more do thoſe want it, who have been more extravagantly wicked? And *if the Righteous*, after all their Care to pleaſe God, *ſhall hardly be ſav'd*, theſe muſt expect a more terrible Appearance before his great Tribunal.

1 St. Pet. 4. 18.

This aſtoniſhes and confounds me, when I come to apply it to my own Caſe; and would doubtleſs drive me into Deſpair, were it not for the Truſt I have in my bleſſed Saviour's Mediation. He has obtain'd a Pardon for my Sins, and ſo I have great Hope and Comfort through him; but otherwiſe I muſt have been in a miſerable, helpleſs Condition. For tho' God is infinitely Patient and Long-ſuffering, he will not wait always to be gracious, but will bring the Sinner to a ſtrict Account for all his Wickedneſſes, poſſibly in this World, but moſt certainly in that which is to come. Nothing can ſave me but his Mercy; but inaſmuch as that is infinite, I will not diſtruſt it, but will humble my ſelf before him, will confeſs and bewail my Sins, and will endeavour,

to

to the utmoſt of my Power, to appeaſe his Anger. *And, Oh that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night* for all mine Iniquities, whereby I have offended ſo good and gracious a God! I hope he will be prevail'd with to extend his Kindneſs to me; but if at laſt I do periſh, I muſt however confeſs to his Glory, that my Deſtruction will be wholly owing to my ſelf.

VI.

A future Judgment.

MY Life is continually drawing towards Eternity; and whether I will conſider it or not, is each Day ſhorter than it was before. So that how healthy ſoever I may be at preſent, no Man knows how ſoon I may be ſummon'd hence. At moſt no great Number of Years can have paſs'd, before I ſhall be laid in the Grave, and all my Hopes, and Comforts, and Deſigns, and Purpoſes, as far as they concern this Life, ſhall vaniſh as a Dream, and nothing ſhall ſeem of any Value, but what may be for my Advantage in the other World. And thus having paſſed off the preſent Stage, I muſt be brought before God's Tribunal, to have all my Thoughts, Words and Actions canvaſſed, and my eternal Portion allotted me, accordingly as they ſhall be found to have been: So ſays St. *Paul, We muſt all appear before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the Things done in the Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* 2 Cor. 5. 10. Though Death makes a Separation for ſome

Time betwixt the Soul and Body, yet, as has been obſerv'd, this is but for a Time; which being paſt, they ſhall infallibly meet again, and be re-united, and never be parted more. An Archangel ſhall be ſent forth, and as by the Sound of a Trumpet ſhall ſummon the Dead out of their Graves, and thenceforward they ſhall live for ever. † Then ſhall the Son of Man alſo deſcend *in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory*; and *ſhall ſit on his Throne*, and cauſe *all Nations* to be *gather'd before him*, that ſo he may take an Account of their different Qualifications, and diſpoſe of them accordingly. Oh the Pangs and Agonies, the Horror and Perplexity of Mind, wherewith the guilty Sinner will be ſeiz'd, when he ſhall come there to receive his Doom! When * above, he may behold an impartial Judge ready to condemn him; beneath, Hell open to receive him; when within, ſhall be a ſtinging Conſcience; without, a burning Fire; here his Sins accuſing him, there the Devils affrighting him; and the good Angels ſhall caſheer him, as not fit to be admitted into Heaven, and the wicked Ones will ſtand ready to hurry him away into everlaſting Deſtruction. When to appear will be intolerable, and yet not to appear will be impoſſible. Whither will he then flee? Or where can he think to conceal himſelf? Which Way ſoever he turns himſelf, he will be ſure to meet with nothing for his Comfort, with nothing but Fear, and Shame, and Sorrow, and Anguiſh, and all the Terrors that the moſt dreadful Aprehenſions can work in him. It is im-

1 Cor. 15. 52.
1 Theſ. 4. 16.
† St. Mat. 24. 30. & Chap. 25. 31, 32.

* Dionyſ. Carthuſ. de quatuor Noviſſimis. Artic. 28.

poſſible

poſſible to expreſs the extream Aſtoniſhment, wherewith all the *Workers of Iniquity* will then be overwhelmed. But this may in a good Meaſure be repreſented by the Judgments threatened in the Revelation, upon the opening of the Sixth Seal; when it is ſaid, *There was a great Earthquake, and the Sun became black as Sackcloth of Hair, and the Moon became as Blood; And the Stars of Heaven fell into the Earth, even as a Fig-tree caſteth her untimely Figs, when ſhe is ſhaken of a mighty Wind: And the Heaven departed as a Scrowl, when it is rolled together; and every Mountain and Iſland were mov'd out of their Places: And the Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, and the chief Captains, and the mighty Men, and every Bondman, and every Freeman, hid themſelves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains; And ſaid to the Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb: For the great Day of his Wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand?* This is a Deſcription of a terrible Juncture, that may not unfitly be accommodated to the frightful Seaſon I am now conſidering. When *the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great Noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat; the Earth alſo, and the Things that are therein ſhall be burnt up; and the Dead, both ſmall and great, ſhall ſtand before God, and the Books ſhall be opened, and they ſhall be judged out of thoſe Things which are written in the Books, according to their Works.* When the Judge being ſate upon his Throne, *Before him ſhall be gathered all Nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats,* and ſhall proceed to enquire into their paſt Converſations, and ſhall allot them their Reward accordingly. Then

Rev. 6. 12, &c.

2 St. Pet. 3. 10.

Rev. 20. 12.

ſhall a narrow Scrutiny be made into all my ings, and an unerring Judgment paſſed upon them. And could I have ever ſo artfully conceal'd my Faults from the Diſcovery of Men, they will then be all brought to Light, before God, Angels, and Men. They cannot eſcape the all-ſeeing Eye of God at preſent; nor ſhall they ever be forgotten by him, but will certainly riſe up in Judgment againſt me, and condemn me at the laſt Day, if I do not make it my Buſineſs to forſake them, and obtain the Pardon of them before I be taken hence. Not the moſt ſecret of my Thoughts, is without his Notice; but he is privy to whatever Impiety lies lurking in my Heart, though it have never proceeded farther; and will bring me to an Account for it. So that could I any Way contrive to impoſe upon the World by hypocritical Pretences, and to hide the Evil of my Heart and Actions from all Mankind, this would ſtand me in no ſtead at the laſt Day. For then the Impoſture would be fully diſcloſed, to my eternal Shame and Sorrow. *There is nothing cover'd, that ſhall not* then *be reveal'd; neither hid, that ſhall not be* made *known.* But *whatſoever has been ſpoken in Darkneſs, ſhall be heard in the Light*; and that which was *ſpoken in the Ear in Cloſets, ſhall be proclaim'd* in the publickeſt Manner, in the Hearing even of the whole World. *There is no Creature that is not manifeſt in God's Sight*, nothing that can eſcape his Notice, *but all Things are naked and open,* γυμνὰ καὶ τετραχηλισμένα, bare and like a Thing cut down the Chine, whereby all the Entrails are expos'd to the View of the Beholder; *all Things are* thus *naked and open to the Eyes of him with whom we have to do,* or rather as Dr. *Whitby* obſerves, πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος, *to whom we muſt give an Account,*

St. Luke 12. 2, 3.

Hebr. 4. 13.

count, of our ſelves and all our Doings. "No "Man, as Dr. *Hammond* paraphraſes upon the "Words, ſhall be able to diſguiſe himſelf ſo "cunningly, but that he ſhall be diſcover'd, "diſclos'd, laid open and bare, as the Sacri-"fice when it is firſt ſlay'd, then cut down "the Back, and all laid open and diſcernible "before the Prieſt. Our very Inwards ſhall then be diſſected, and Men and Angels ſhall ſee into the darkeſt Corners and cloſeſt Receſſes of the Heart, and ſhall be made acquainted with all the Corruption and Pollution that has been wont to lodge there. A doleful Diſcovery indeed! And who would not dread and tremble at the leaſt Thought of it? It is not in our Power now to conceive the Height of that Confuſion, wherein the guilty Sinner will find himſelf, when thus publickly unmask'd, when thoſe Wickedneſſes, which once he would not endure to hear of, and therefore us'd all Means to keep them from the Knowledge of his Companions and Acquaintance, ſhall be charged upon him, proved againſt him, and finally puniſh'd with everlaſting Perdition. But this we can all do, and are the greateſt Fools in the World if we do it not; we can condemn our ſelves and all our moſt beloved Iniquities now in Time, whilſt the Day of Grace is continued to us, and God is reconcileable upon Condition we duly apply our ſelves to him for Mercy and Salvation. We can by his Aſſiſtance reform and amend our Doings, and earneſtly ſtudy to lay up to our ſelves Treaſures in Heaven. We can humble our ſelves before our bleſſed Saviour, and beſeech and entreat him, as he has already been our Ranſom, ſo likewiſe to be our Advocate with the Father, pleading his

Death

Death and all his Sufferings in our Behalf, whereby to reinſtate us in his Favour, and obtain us an Admiſſion into his Kingdom. And can we be ſo ſottiſh as not to make this our conſtant Care? Can we think of the Day of the Lord, and the immenſe Weight of the Sentence then to be paſs'd upon us, and not ſet our ſelves with all our Might to prepare for it? They that can act thus unaccountably, ought immediately to diſown all Pretence to Reaſon and Underſtanding, and to acknowledge themſelves more ſenſeleſs than the worſt of Brutes, none of which were ever guilty of ſuch egregious, intolerable Stupidity as this is.

VII.

The everlaſting State whereto each one ſhall be adjudged at the Laſt Day, according to his Doings.

THIS Judgment being once over, every one muſt be thenceforward ſettled in an eternal State, though of very different Kinds, according as we ſhall be found to have obſerved, or neglected our Duty during our ſhort Stay here in this World. So our bleſſed Saviour, who is alſo to be our Judge, teaches, St. *Mat.* 25. 46. Where having been deſcribing the Nature of the Judgment that is to paſs upon all Mankind, and having ſpoken of the Righteous and the Wicked, under the Metaphor of *Sheep and Goats*, and having declar'd the joyful Sentence that ſhall be pronounced in favour of the former, and the heavy Doom that

ſhall be awarded to the other, he concludes with this farther Declaration of what will be the Effect of the Judgment thus given; *Theſe*, the Wicked of whom he had laſt ſpoken, *ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment*; *but the Righteous into Life Eternal*. The natural Importance of which Words is, that a laſting future State will be then to ſucceed, either in incomparable, ineſtimable, unconceivable Bliſs and Felicity, for ſuch is † *Eternal Life* declar'd to be in Scripture, or in the moſt dreadful and intolerable Tortures, Pangs, and Agonies, in the bottomleſs Pit, the Puniſhment whereinto the Wicked are order'd to *depart*, *Ver.* 41.

Bleſſed and happy, thrice happy Souls, that can attain to the *Life* here mention'd! Such ſhall enjoy the Favour of God and his beatifick Preſence; and ſhall not only be admitted to behold his Glory, but to reign with him, and be in ſome Meaſure transform'd into his Likeneſs, abounding in all that ſhall be ſuitable to their enlarged Deſires, and God only knows how much more than they could ſo much as deſire or wiſh for. It is above our Faculties at preſent to conceive what thoſe glorious Rewards are, which our good God has prepar'd for them that love him. * *It doth not yet appear*, even to our Imaginations, *what we ſhall be*; *but* this *we know* before-hand, that *when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is*. Wherefore let me now think a little with my ſelf; How tranſcendent a Bleſſedneſs muſt it be, to ſee God, and be like him, to partake of his Glory, and have an

† St. Mat. 25. 35. St. Luke 12. 32. & 22. 29.
* 1 St. Joh. 3. 2.

endleſs Fruition of him, in that bliſsful Kingdom where all Delights abound, and whence all Sorrow and Tears are perfectly baniſh'd; where none are Sick, or grow Old, or Die; nor are perplex'd with Cares, nor tormented with Fears. Where a ſerene Tranquility is always to be met with, and Joy, and Love, and Peace, have ſettled their Abode: May my Heart be always enflamed with the Love of that raviſhing State; ſo as that I may throughly learn to deſpiſe all Things elſe in Compariſon of it. Why do I trifle away my Time and Pains in purſuit of Things that will not profit, and not rather labour after thoſe which would be of everlaſting Advantage to me? What a Meanneſs of Spirit is it, to take up with this Life's tranſient, imperfect Entertainments, and in the mean while neglect *the true Riches*, and loſe an invaluable *Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away*? Can I condeſcend to employ my ſelf, in labouring after the Things of this World with an inſatiable Deſire, as if I could never have enough of them, though I know I muſt ſhortly die, and leave them all behind me, and yet not be perſwaded to take Pains for what would render me unconceivably happy for ever in the other? This is the very Height of Madneſs; and for which I ſhall be ſure to condemn my ſelf when it ſhall be too late, and inceſſantly to wiſh I had been wiſer when I had it in my Choice, to make ſure of a bleſſed Eternity.

Eſpecially when I call to Mind, that I cannot fall ſhort of the forementioned Bleſſedneſs, without incurring the dreadful Vengeance of eternal Fire. And can I endure the Thoughts of this ſo diſmal a Change? Far be it from me thus totally to ruin my ſelf for the Sake of any

any Eaſe, or Pleaſure, Wealth, or Honour, that I can hope to enjoy here. Whatever unequal Notion I have of it at preſent, it is a great and a certain Truth, that the *Wages of Sin is Death*, Death not only temporal, but eternal. And can I reſolve thus ſenſeleſly to ruin my ſelf, rather than accept of that Salvation, which is offer'd in the Goſpel, upon the reaſonableſt Terms that may be? *It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the* living God, to become the Objects of his implacable Indignation, to groan under the juſt Severities of his heavy Diſpleaſure, to be lodged in a Bed of Flames, and have the Devils and damned Spirits for Companions, or rather for outrageous Executioners, without hope of Deliverance, though after ever ſo long a Space, to be forſaken of all that is good, all that is happy, or might tend to make us ſo, to be everlaſtingly condemn'd to Darkneſs and Horror, to Weeping, and Wailing, and Gnaſhing of Teeth, to the never-dying Worm, and Fire unquenchable. This the Damned in Hell know to their Coſt; and for this Reaſon fret and rage beyond Meaſure. And what is it they would not give, or do, to recover ſome of thoſe happy Opportunities of ſeeking after a better State, which we ſo idly ſquander away? Unhappy Wretches! They find by lamentable Experience what the Loſs of Heaven implies in it, and how much it was their real Intereſt, to have taken Warning, when they were call'd upon in their Life-time, to be Holy, Wiſe, and Happy. They are always in the Agonies of Death, and yet never ſo dead, but that they are ſtill to live in the moſt exquiſite, and moſt laſting Dolors. Their Fire always burns, but never conſumes them; their Worm always gnaws, but never kills them. Whilſt they were alive they would

Rom. 6. 23.

Hebr. 10. 31.

never give over provoking Almighty God; and now God will never give over puniſhing them for their numerous Provocations. There is no End or Meaſure of their Sorrows, no Intermiſſion of their Pains, no Hope or Comfort for them, no Proſpect of any Thing, but unconceivable, intolerable, interminable Grief, and Miſery, and Anguiſh. And can I think it too much to live regularly, and take thoſe Courſes which will make me happy in a good Meaſure here, that I may eſcape all this dire Vengeance, and be compleatly and infinitely happy to all Eternity hereafter? This were a far wiſer Courſe than to gratify my own worldly, or carnal Inclinations, for a ſhort, no one knows how ſhort a Time, to the everlaſting Deſtruction of my ſelf both Soul and Body in Hell. Awake therefore, O my drowſy Soul, and beſtir thy ſelf now in Time, whereby to prevent thoſe Tortures, which thou muſt otherwiſe be ſure to undergo, and can'ſt never hope to get rid of, when once thou comeſt to feel the Weight of them. Take Warning whilſt thou art yet on this Side the Grave, and may'ſt have Time and Grace to ſave thy ſelf, if it be not through thy own Neglect or Obſtinacy in Sinning. Imagine to thy ſelf the doleful Caſe of a condemn'd Sinner, already plac'd in the Regions of Darkneſs, in thoſe melancholick Shades of perpetual Night, where no Day ever dawns, no Light ever breaks in; depriv'd of all the Comforts and Pleaſures of Life, and preſerv'd in being only to be puniſh'd, wrack'd and tormented, with a frightful Remembrance of his own Guilt and Folly, piercing him like a Dagger at the Heart, and no Room left for Repentance. Imagine him beholding the Glory

Glory and Felicity of the Bleſſed, raging with Envy at their Happineſs, and tearing himſelf for Anguiſh and Vexation, when he reflects upon what he has loſt, purely for the Sake of his brutiſh Luſts, and unreaſonable Paſſions, for thoſe Pleaſures of Sin which were but for a Moment, but for which he muſt now pay dear for evermore. Imagine him farther lamenting the Sharpneſs of his Pains, the exceſſive Burnings of that Fire and Brimſtone, wherein he inceſſantly languiſhes, and the Malice of the Devils diſcharging their Fury upon him, and plaguing and tormenting him with the utmoſt Violence. Imagine him once more cut off from all Hope of Redreſs, ſo as not only to be thus infinitely tortur'd at preſent, but to be aſſur'd beyond all Doubt, that theſe his Tortures ſhall perpetually harraſs him through a long Eternity. Imagine the Sinner, I ſay, irrecoverably plung'd in this Exceſs of unſpeakable Miſery, and ſee if all the Glory of the World can tempt thee to change Condition with him but for one Hour: If not, what deſperate Frenzy muſt that be, that can withthee from taking all the Care that may be to ſave thy ſelf from ſuch inſupportable, and yet irreparable Deſtruction? Can I ſuffer my ſelf to be thoughtleſs and unconcern'd, when upon the Brink of this bottomleſs Abyſs of Pains and Sorrows, and each Moment in danger of dropping into it? No, I will uſe my utmoſt Diligence to guard againſt that Place of Torments, and procure *an Inheritance among all them which are ſanctified.* I will make it my Buſineſs to keep within that *narrow Way that leadeth unto Life*; will *ſtrive to enter at the ſtrait Gate*, though I tug hard to get through; will do or ſuffer whatever it ſhall pleaſe God to re-

quire

quire of me, or lay upon me, and will be highly thankful, if I can at last be carried into Heaven, though it were in a Chariot of Fire. Welcome Sighs and Tears, welcome whatever Pennances my Religion can impose upon me, whatever Terrors the World can threaten me with, whatever Pains I can be at in God's Service, welcome all that can befal me for my Saviour's Sake, *who endured the Cross, and despised the Shame* for me. I will watch, and pray, will deny my self, and mortify the Flesh, will do my best to proceed from Grace to Grace. And may it please the Good and Gracious God, that Grace may at last have its Completion in Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Praise, World without End. *Amen.*

A COL-

A

COLLECTION

OF FARTHER

PRAYERS

FOR THE

Sick Perſon:

To be uſed upon *ſeveral Occaſions*, as he ſhall ſee fit.

My Voice ſhalt thou hear betimes, O Lord: Early in the Morning will I direct my Prayer unto thee, and will look up. Pſal. 5. 3.

My Hope hath been in Thee, O Lord: I have ſaid, Thou art my God. Pſal. 31. 16.

Hear me, O Lord, for thy Loving-kindneſs is comfortable: Turn thee unto me according to the Multitude of thy Mercies. Pſal. 69. 17.

LONDON:

Printed for *W. Freeman*, MDCCXII.

A

COLLECTION

OF PARTICULAR

PRAYERS

FOR THE

Sick Person:

To be us'd upon several Occasions,
as he shall see fit.

LONDON:

Printed for W. Freeman, MDCCXII.

PROPER PRAYERS For the Uſe of the SICK.

A Prayer for the Sick when firſt taken Ill.

I.

O Almighty Lord of Heaven and Earth, who giveſt Life, and Health, and all other Bleſſings, and recalleſt them as it pleaſeth Thee; I deſire to behold thy Hand in every Thing that befalleth me, that under all thy Diſpenſations I may look up to Thee, the Author of them, and may ſtudy to improve them to thy Glory. And now that I find my Body in Diſorder, and Sickneſs has already taken hold of me, I immediately fly to thy Almighty Power, and unſpeakable Goodneſs for Relief. And do not thou refuſe to hear me, when I call upon thee. Give me Grace to account of my Diſtemper as thy Fatherly Viſitation, and to hearken both to the Rod, and him that has appointed it; and not only to

bear thy Chaſtiſement with Patience and Submiſſion, but to ſeek that I may be made better by it; to enquire into the End for which it comes, and faithfully endeavour to anſwer thy Deſign in it. As it is a Scourge for my Sins, let it alſo be a Cure for them, ſo effectually awakening my Soul, to ſerve and pleaſe Thee, as that I may no more return to Folly, nor ever allow my ſelf in what tends to thy Diſhonour, and my own Deſtruction. Or if Death is to be the End of this my Sickneſs, let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my laſt End be like his, that I may leave this World as becomes a true Diſciple of our bleſſed Lord, with a ſteady Affiance in his Mediation, an Unconcernedneſs for the Things of this Life, an unfeigned Repentance for all my Sins, and a chearful Reſignation of my Soul into thy Hands, as into the Hands of a loving God and merciful Father, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

DEliver me, O Lord, if it be thy bleſſed Will, from my preſent Want of Health. Sanctify it to me, that it may be a Means of working in me, what is well-pleaſing in thy Sight, mortifying all Vice and Wickedneſs in me, and raiſing up my Thoughts and Affections to a better State, and making me more intent than ever, upon approving my ſelf to Thee. And this good End being once accompliſh'd, may it pleaſe thee to raiſe me from my Bed, and enable me to put all my good Purpoſes in Execution, to thy Honour and Glory, and my own Salvation, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

III. BUT,

III.

BUT, Lord, if I am not any longer to continue here, grant me a ſafe and an eaſy Paſſage hence, that Death may be to me a bleſſed Entrance into thy Heavenly Kingdom. I am not fond of Life, for any other End, but to ſerve thee, and ſave my own Soul. But if it may tend to either of theſe Uſes, deny me neither the Enjoyment of my former Soundneſs and Strength, nor Grace to make a ſuitable Improvement of it. And whenever thou haſt determin'd to take me hence, take me, I moſt humbly beſeech thee, into thy Favour, through thy Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

IV.

I Am thine, O Lord, ſave me, and ſuffer me not to be put to Confuſion; but fit me for whatever Thou deſigneſt for me. Cleanſe and purge me from all Corruption, take away all my Droſs, and renew a right Spirit within me. Try me, O God, and ſeek the Ground of my Heart. Prove me, and examine my Thoughts: Look well if there be any Way of Wickedneſs in me, and lead me in the Way everlaſting, through our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

Upon ſending for the Miniſter to Viſit the Sick Perſon.

I.

ALmighty and moſt merciful Father, who of thy divine Providence haſt appointed an Order of Men, to officiate in thy Name, not only as thine Ambaſſadors, to call upon People, and entreat them *to be Reconciled to Thee*, but moreover to make known thy Word and Will to them, to adminiſter thy holy Sacraments, to be Advocate to Thee for them, and to perform all thoſe Offices, which are neceſſary for building them up, in their moſt holy Faith; Let it not be in vain, that I have now ſent to deſire the good Man's Company and Aſſiſtance. All his Endeavours without Thee muſt inevitably prove as nothing. Could he ſpeak with the Tongue of Men and Angels, it were to no Purpoſe, unleſs thy Bleſſing go along with what ſhall be deliver'd. Nor will all his kind Offices do me any Service, if not accompanied with thy Grace. Hence I beg of thee, moſt gracious God, to be with him and proſper him in all his Undertakings for my Good. Open his Mouth, that he may ſpeak a Word in Seaſon. Hear all his Prayers that he ſhall offer up for me; and grant me all the ineſtimable Bleſſings he ſhall implore in my Behalf. And open mine Ears likewiſe, that I may duly attend to whatſoever he ſhall tell me out of thy Law, and diſpoſe my Heart carefully and conſcientiouſly to perform it, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

II. LET

II.

LET thy Holy Spirit be preſent with him to proſper his kind Intentions, that they may prove effectual, for fitting and preparing me for my laſt great Change; which cannot poſſibly be far off, but may perhaps be already at the Door. It is thy own Command by the Mouth of thy holy Apoſtle, that *If any be ſick, he call for the Elders of the Church, to pray over him*, with a Promiſe, that *The Prayer of Faith ſhall ſave the Sick, and if he have committed Sins, they ſhall be forgiven him*; and with a Declaration moreover, that *The effectual fervent Prayer of the Righteous Man*, and moſt certainly not the leſs, if he be dedicated to holy Miniſtrations, to tranſact Matters betwixt Thee and Thy Church, *availeth much*. In Obedience to thy Command, I have now ſent to my proper Paſtor, the Miniſter of thy Word and Sacraments amongſt us, to crave his Help in my great Neceſſity. And I moſt humbly beg of Thee, that of thy wonted Clemency and Goodneſs, thou wilt condeſcend to bleſs our Meeting, and make it ſucceſsful to thoſe weighty Ends whereto it is intended, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Upon Appearance of Recovery.

I.

ALmighty and ever-bleſſed Lord God, from whom alone are the Iſſues of Life and Death, who killeſt and makeſt alive, bringeſt to the Grave, and bringeſt back again; I deſire with a Heart full of unfeigned Gratitude, to proclaim thy great Goodneſs towards me at this Time. I praiſe Thee for thy ſeaſonable Correction, whereby to put me in Mind of my natural Frailty and Mortality, to wean my Affections from this vain tranſitory World, and to put me upon the more diligent Preparation of my ſelf for Another and a Better. Bleſſed be thy Name, that thou didſt not immediately cut me off without Warning, as thou mighteſt juſtly have done; and not only haſt allowed me a Space of Reflection, whereby to get my Soul into the fitter Poſture, for Appearing before thy dreadful Tribunal, but now giveſt me Hopes of a Space, to reduce my holy Purpoſes and Reſolutions into Practice. May it ſeem good in thy Sight, to perfect that Recovery thou ſeemeſt to have begun in me, and to grant me a longer Continuance here; not for the Gratification of any worldly or ſenſual Inclinations, or Affections in me; but to the End that by a good Improvement of the Time thou ſhalt allow me, I may obtain a compleater Conqueſt over all ſort of Vice and Wickedneſs, and a greater Readineſs to the Performance of my Duty to Thee, may cleanſe my ſelf from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, and may perfect Holineſs in thy Fear, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

AS my ſole Dependance is upon Thee, O Lord, and all my Hopes of Health are from Thee alone, ſo I acknowledge all my Services to be due to Thee, and that I muſt leave my ſelf without Excuſe, if I do not carefully employ all the Time thou ſhalt afford me in this World, to thy Honour and Glory. Do thou therefore incline thy Heart to have a conſtant Reſpect to this great End of my Living here; that I may not trifle away the Life thou giveſt me, for working out my Salvation, much leſs miſpend it, in any vicious or ſinful Courſe, but that I may behave my ſelf always as in thy Preſence, and as remembring the great Account I muſt one Day give up to Thee, and I know not how ſoon. Grant it may be my daily Study, to be in ſuch Readineſs for my latter End, that it may never find me unprovided for it. At this Time ſanctify, I beſeech thee, my preſent Condition to me; and give me Grace to make a right Uſe of this, and all other thy Diſpenſations; that if it ſhall be thy good Pleaſure to reſtore me to my former Health, I may lead the Reſidue of my Life in thy Fear, and to thy Glory. Or elſe give me Grace ſo to take thy Viſitation, that after this painful Life ended, I may dwell with thee in Life everlaſting, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

III. LORD,

III.

LORD, I pray thee, that thy Grace may always prevent, and follow me, and make me continually to be given to all good Works, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Upon a Recovery from Sickness.

I.

O Holy and most Gracious Lord God, who art infinitely good to them that put their Trust in thee; I have not only learned by the hearing of the Ear, but my own late Experience has taught me, that thou art abundant in Goodness and Mercy. It is in thee I live, move, and have my Being. And thou hast in a particular Manner express'd thy Love to me, in lifting me up from the Gates of Death. Thou hast brought my Soul from the Grave; and hast kept me alive, that I should not go down into the Pit. For this and all other thy undeserved Favours, for ever blessed be thy holy Name. I earnestly desire that my Heart may be duly affected with a Sense of them, and that I may never dare to abuse such transcendent Loving-kindness; but whatever Length thou addest to my Days, may be faithfully spent in observing thy Laws, and exalting thy Praise. I am made whole; make me also strictly watchful over my self, that I sin no more, least a worse Thing come unto me. Let the Consideration of the weak Condition I have been in, have such Influence upon my Mind, as that I may not dare to neglect, or defer

defer any Part of my Duty, leſt I be ſnatch'd away before it be finiſh'd. I know not how ſoon I may be reduc'd to the ſame, or a worſe Eſtate, when I ſhall be able to do very little for my ſelf. Cauſe me therefore to take Care in Time, to make my Calling and Election ſure, that ſuch a Viſitation may be no Surprize to me, nor may be able to terrify me with the Dread of an unhappy Death. As thou haſt given me a Space for Amendment, give me moreover a Heart carefully to amend, whatſoever is amiſs in me. Make me always mindful how frail I am, and how unable to ſtand the Shock of another Sickneſs, whenſoever thou ſhalt ſend it, and to apply my ſelf in the mean Time to do, what it may be then too late to wiſh I had done. Let no one Sin ever have Dominion over me, nor any Temptation prevail againſt me, and make me regardleſs of the indiſpenſable Obligations I ſtand in to Thee, my moſt loving Saviour and Deliverer. Work in me both to will, and to do of thy good Pleaſure. And whilſt thou ſeeſt fit to continue me here, let every Day thou addeſt to my Life, bring me a Step nearer to the Fruition of thine everlaſting Glory. Grant this, O Father, for Jeſus Chriſt's Sake, our only Mediator and Redeemer. *Amen.*

II.

BLeſs the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits. Who redeemeth thy Life from Deſtruction, and crowneth thee with Mercy and Loving-kindneſs. I called upon the Lord in my Diſtreſs, and thou heardeſt me, and anſweredſt my Requeſt. Thou haſt inclined thine Ear to me, and art become my Salvation.

Salvation. May my Mouth be always filled with thy Praiſe. And may my Gratitude farther ſhew forth it ſelf by an univerſal Obedience to thy Precepts, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

III.

TO the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who only hath Immortality, dwelling in that Light, which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath ſeen, nor can ſee, be Honour, and Power everlaſting. *Amen.*

Upon ſending for the Phyſician.

O Moſt gracious Lord God, on whom is all my Dependance, and of whoſe abundant Mercy it is that I am now in the Land of the Living, though at preſent in a weak and lanquiſhing Condition; [or, *though at preſent ſeized with Sickneſs,*] ſuccour and relieve me for thy Mercies Sake. I am deſirous to make uſe of ſuch Means as thou haſt appointed, in order to a Recovery, that I may not ſeem any Way to ſlight that Life, thou haſt condeſcended to beſtow upon me, and hitherto to continue to me. And foraſmuch as thou haſt ordain'd the Phyſician for the Benefit of thoſe who languiſh under any bodily Diſtemper, I have reſolv'd to try his Skill in order to a Cure. But my chief Hope is in Thee. O be thou my Helper; for without Thee vain is the Help of Man. Direct thy Servant to what may be proper for my Caſe; and let thy Bleſſing accompany his Preſcriptions; and give

Succeſs to them. All the moſt efficacious Methods of Cure are nothing of themſelves, nor can work farther than thou impowereſt them. To thee therefore I addreſs my ſelf for thy Concurrence with them. It is but with thee to ſpeak the Word, and thy Servant ſhall be heal'd. Oh may it pleaſe thee to iſſue out thy Command, and it ſhall not be in vain that I am about to uſe the Means that ſhall be directed. But never permit me to put my Truſt in whatſoever Medicine, but only in thy Bleſſing, without which all inferior Aſſiſtance will be found of no Advantage. Thou art the great Phyſician, that alone can'ſt effectually remove all my Maladies. And all other Helps are but Inſtruments in thy Hand, that work according to thy good Pleaſure. Be thou with me, to guide and aſſiſt, to bleſs and proſper them, to thine own Glory, and the Welfare of thine unworthy Servant, who here moſt humbly ſues to thee for Pity, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Upon taking of Phyſick.

O Lord, the Father of Mercies, and God of all Conſolation, our only Help in Time of Need; I moſt humbly ſupplicate thy Favour, to thy Faithful Servant labouring under thy Correction. Lay no more upon me, than thou wilt enable me to bear. Conſider my feeble mortal Conſtitution, and proportion my Diſtemper to my Strength, that I may know how to bear it, with a true Chriſtian Patience and Reſignation to thy Divine Will. Hear my Complaints, and remove the Cauſe of them, as ſhall ſeem to thee moſt expedient for

for me. Give a Bleſſing to what I now take, in order to a Recovery of my loſt Health. Be thou my chief Phyſician; for thy Direction cannot fail me. And ſeeing I put my whole Truſt in Thee, vouchſafe of thy great Mercy, to adminiſter to me in my Neceſſity, and to grant me Eaſe and Comfort, and Health here in this World, and to fit me for everlaſting Life with Thee, and thy holy Angels and Saints in the World to come, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

When given over by the Phyſician.

I.

ALmighty and Everlaſting God, whoſe I am, and whom I have heartily deſired to ſerve with Reverence and Godly Fear; though I am grieved to think with what great Weakneſs and Imperfection I have done it. Theſe my Failings I lament and bewail before thee: And much more my groſſer Sins and Iniquities, whereby I have highly provok'd thee againſt my own Soul. I heartily deteſt and renounce them all, moſt humbly beſeeching thee not to caſt me off by reaſon of them. Hearken not to their Cry againſt me, but to my bleſſed Saviour's Interceſſion for me: Waſh them all away with his moſt precious Blood, that they may neither appear againſt me to my Shame and Sorrow here in this World, nor to my eternal Condemnation in the other. Conſider my Contrition, accept my Tears, aſſwage my Pain, as ſhall ſeem to thee moſt expedient for me. And forasmuch as I put my full Truſt only in thy Mercy,

Mercy, impute not to me my former Tranſgreſſions; but ſtrengthen me with thy bleſſed Spirit; and whenſoever thou art pleas'd to take me hence, take me unto thy Favour, through the Merits of thy moſt dearly beloved Son, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

SEeing the Phyſician has already paſs'd his Sentence, and I have no farther Expectation, or Hope of Benefit by his Miniſtry; and conſequently am to look upon my ſelf as no longer deſign'd for this World, I with the profoundeſt Humility entreat thy Pity, O Lord, in order to the Other. And ſince there remains no probable Means of Cure for my Body, do thou condeſcend to take my ſick Soul nto thy Hands, and cure it of all the Guilt that yet adheres to it, and ſave it for thy Mercies Sakes. If thou wilt thou can'ſt yet raiſe me up, and grant me a longer Continuance here. But foraſmuch as in all Appearance the Time of my Diſſolution draweth near, beſtow upon me thoſe holy and heavenly Qualifications, which may fit me for my approaching Change. Gather every Root of Bitterneſs out of my Mind. Reſcue me from the Power, and defend me againſt all the Wiles of the Devil. Mortify all the Remainders of the Old Man in me; and renew me perfectly in the Inward Man. Quicken, improve, and increaſe every Spark of Grace that is in me; and make me to be ſuch before thou calleſt me hence, as I deſire to be thenceforward to all Eternity, through Jeſus Chriſt our bleſſed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

III.

I Am coming to thee, ſweet *Jeſu*; Open thine Arms to receive me graciouſly. Thou haſt purchaſed me to thy ſelf; ſuffer me not to fall ſhort of all that Happineſs thou diedſt to procure for me. Withdraw not thy Mercy from me at my laſt Hour, when I have the greateſt Need of it, and muſt be everlaſtingly ruin'd without it. Let not the Enemy have any Advantage againſt me in my Extremity, nor the Wicked approach to hurt me. Give thy holy Angels Charge over me, that they may conduct me ſafely through the Valley of Death, and bring me to thine everlaſting Kingdom; that there I may ſing inceſſant Hallelujahs, with the bleſſed Choir of Saints and Angels for evermore. *Amen.*

IV.

BLeſſed God, merciful and gracious, What great Things haſt thou prepar'd for them that love thee; Such as Eye has not ſeen, nor Ear heard, and it has not enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive? Oh that I may be admitted to taſt of ſuch incomparable Bleſſedneſs! It will be a happy Exchange for me to leave this World, and all its mean, tranſitory Enjoyments, for the ineſtimable Glories that are promis'd at thy right Hand. In firm Hope and Expectation whereof I commend my Soul into thy Hands, O Lord, thou God of Truth. *Amen.* Even ſo come Lord Jeſus.

When

When he apprehends himself about to expire.

HAST thee, O Lord, to deliver me. In thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, my most merciful Saviour and onely Redeemer, in thee alone is all my Trust. Let me never be confounded. O blessed Jesu, I sue to thee for Mercy. Mercy, O Lord, and Forgiveness of my Sins, is what I most humbly beg of thee. O Christ, save me. O God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, Three Persons, and One God, have Mercy upon me. Receive my Soul into thy Hands. And for thy Mercies Sake place it in thy heavenly Kingdom, among thy holy Angels and blessed Saints. O Lord, hear me, and be merciful to me. Into thy Hands I commend my Spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of Truth. Amen, *O Lord.* Amen.

For those about the sick Person.

AS Thou, O God, art infinitely gracious to thy poor Creatures, continually multiplying thy Loving-kindnesses towards us from Day to Day, and from Year to Year, and hast required us to be loving and kind to each other, and desire our Neighbour's Welfare as our own; In an humble Imitation of this thy Goodness, and Obedience to thy Command, I here beg Leave to supplicate thy Favour in Behalf of all those who attend about my Bed, or have in any Respect the Trouble of assisting me, now that I know not how to take Care of my self. Recompence them, O Lord, all the Good that they have done for me. Be with

them whenſoever they ſhall come to be in the ſame helpleſs Condition they now ſee me in; and furniſh them at that Time with ſuch tender-hearted and careful Friends, ſuch affectionate Relations, and ſuch Aſſiſtance of all Kinds, that they may not want any of thoſe neceſſary Helps, which I have receiv'd from Them. And in the mean Time grant that by ſeeing me in this helpleſs weak Eſtate, they may be ſo effectually admoniſh'd of their own Mortality, that they may learn forthwith to apply themſelves, to the working out their Salvation with Care and Diligence, and ſo may be always prepar'd for Sickneſs, or Death, whenſoever thou ſhalt ſend either of them. This I beg for them all, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and only Saviour. *Amen.*

For his Family and Relations.

I.

O Lord God Almighty, who dwelleſt in the higheſt Heavens, and yet humbleſt thy ſelf to behold thy worthleſs Creatures here below, and diſpenſeſt thy Bleſſings among them, as ſeems beſt to thine infinite Wiſdom; I praiſe thee for the conſtant Experience I have had of thy great Goodneſs to me all my Life long. And now that I am going the Way of all Fleſh, and muſt be ſpeedily gather'd to my Fathers, I not only deſire to retain to my laſt Breath, a thankful Remembrance of this thy Loving-kindneſs; but beg Liberty alſo at the ſame Time to intercede with thee, for thoſe I leave behind me; for [my Wife and Children, and other] my near and dear Relations.

tions. Take them all into thy Protection, and adminiſter to them all Things pertaining to Life and Godlineſs. Be a Father to the Fatherleſs, and a Husband to the Widow. All their Wants are open to thy Knowledge, let them be ſupplied by thy Power and Goodneſs. Keep them as the Apple of thine Eye. Preſerve them under the Shadow of thy Wings. And let no Evil come nigh their Dwelling. Thy Bleſſing is incomparably the moſt deſirable Portion I can leave them; let not that be wanting to them. But beſtow upon them, I beſeech thee, all Bleſſings Spiritual and Temporal in Chriſt Jeſus. *Amen.*

II.

BLeſs them in their Bodies, and bleſs them in their Souls; Bleſs them in the Basket, and in the Store, in their Going out, and in their Coming in, and all that they put their Hands unto. But above all, bleſs them with the choiceſt Spiritual Bleſſings; with a pure Heart, and a ſound Mind; with a Contempt of the World, and a ſure Truſt in Thee; with a grateful Senſe of thy Kindneſs, and a Soul full of Love; with a Knowledge of thy Will, and a Care to perform it; with the Aſſiſtance of thy Spirit, and Life everlaſting, through Jeſus Chriſt thy Son our Lord. *Amen.*

When under any ſtrong Temptation.

I.

O Heavenly and moſt merciful Father, I moſt humbly beſeech thee for thy Son's ſake Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, have mercy upon me, and ſuccour me in theſe terrible Aſ-

ſaults and Temptations of the Devil. Deliver my Soul from all his Power and Craft. Send me ſtrength from above, that I may retain my Integrity, may reſiſt the Enemy, and ſtand ſtedfaſt in this Day of Tryal. Be thou my ſtrong Rock and Caſtle of Defence; that being preſerved through thy Grace and Aſſiſtance, I may continue as I have promiſed, and as thou mayeſt juſtly expect me to be, thy faithful Souldier and Servant unto my Life's End. This I beg, O Lord, through the Merits, and for the Sake, of thy dear Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *Amen.*

II.

HEar me, O Lord, for thy Loving-kindneſs is comfortable. Turn thee unto me according to the Multitude of thy Mercies, and hide not thy Face from thy Servant, when I am in Trouble. Oh haſt thee, and hear me, draw nigh unto my Soul, and ſave it; Oh deliver me from my ſubtle and outrageous Enemy. O Lord, my God, lighten mine Eyes, that I ſleep not in Death; leaſt mine Enemy ſay I have prevailed againſt him. If I be caſt down, they that trouble me will rejoice at it. But my Truſt is in thy Mercy, and my Heart is joyful in thy Salvation: Oh let it never be wanting to me; but hearken to me, and hear me at all Times, but more eſpecially in this my preſent Conflict with the grand Deſtroyer of Souls; and give me Cauſe to praiſe and magnify the Name of thee my Lord God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

III.

III.

O God, who knoweſt me to be ſet in the Midſt of ſo many and great Dangers, that by reaſon of the Frailty of my Nature, I cannot always ſtand upright; Grant me ſuch Strength and Protection as may ſupport me in all Dangers, and carry me through all Temptations, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

When tempted to Preſumption.

ALmighty and moſt righteous God, who ſearcheſt the Hearts, and trieſt the Reins, and rendereſt to every one according to his Doings; take Pity upon me a guilty Sinner, and ſuffer me not to preſume upon thy Mercy, whilſt I retain an Affection for any kind of Sin. I know thy Clemency and Compaſſion are infinite, and thou art always ready to embrace a returning Prodigal. And I cannot therefore Doubt of thy Pardon, were I duly qualified for it. But my only Danger is, leaſt my Sins have made too great a Separation, betwixt thee and thy poor Creature, for me to hope any longer for thy Favour. Wherefore I humbly pray thee, to diſcover me truly to my ſelf; and if there be any Way of Wickedneſs yet remaining in me, purge it away, that I may be a fit Object of thy Fatherly Commiſeration. Permit me not to encourage my ſelf in a groundleſs Reliance upon thy Favour, whilſt in the mean Time I am really unqualified for it. But teach me ſeriouſly and impartially to examine my Heart and Ways, before I venture to paſs ſo eaſy a Sentence upon my ſelf. Let not thy Patience to me hitherto work in me an Expecta-

tion of future Happineſs, upon any other Terms than thoſe of the Goſpel; that ſo I may be induced to ſtudy, how moſt effectually to make my Calling and Election ſure; and to this End may ſet my ſelf conſciencioufly and univerſally to obſerve thy Commandments all the Days of my Life. Help me to reform all that is amiſs in me, and to make ſuch a Progreſs in Holineſs, as that I may ſafely depend upon thy Mercy and Kindneſs to me here in this World, and may be for ever Happy with thee in the other, through the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt my only Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

When inclinable to Deſpair.

O Almighty Lord God, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and in him of all thy faithful Servants; I am aſhamed, and greatly confounded, to think that I ſhould ſeem in any wiſe to diſtruſt thy Goodneſs, after I have had ſuch abundant Tryal of it, and after all the gracious Promiſes thou haſt made to thoſe who ask any Thing according to thy Will. Yet I muſt confeſs, that Fear, and a horrible Dread, have taken hold of me, leaſt my Portion ſhould be amongſt the Reprobate, who are to be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. This Thought ſtrikes me to the Heart, and I am not able to bear up under the Weight of it. Do thou therefore ſupport me with the Comforts of thy Holy Spirit. Speak Peace to my diſconſolate Soul, and aſſure me thou art reconciled to me in the Son of thy Love; that thou art my

my Sun and my Shield at present, and wilt be my exceeding great Reward hereafter. Forgive these my Doubts and Fears. And so dispose my Mind and confirm my Trust in thee, as that a Remembrance of my Sins may never incline me to despair of thy Kindness, but on the other Hand may drive me to my Saviour, to sue for his Intercession in my Behalf, and may put me upon an indefatigable Attendance upon my Duty, whereby to capacitate me for a sure Confidence in his All-sufficient Merits and Mediation. Do not only pardon all my Transgressions for his Sake, that so I may be for ever happy in thy Heavenly Kingdom, but convince me in the mean Time that thou hast done it, for my Satisfaction and Comfort, whilst I remain here below. I look upon it as one of Satan's Stratagems, to put me out of Heart, that he may prevent my earnest Endeavours to please Thee. Do thou therefore enable me to reject this and all other his Motions, and so to betake my self to thee for Relief, and so to observe thy Holy Laws, as that thou mayest cause thy Face to shine graciously upon me, and make me to rejoice in thy Favour, both now and evermore, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

When Weak and Languishing.

I.

O Merciful God, who for the Sin of Man didst send Death into the World, and Sickness in order to it; behold my weak and languishing Estate, and extend thy Pity to me. Thou seest to how low a Condition I am reduced; and what will become me, none

beſides thee knows. But thou art a God, who art full of Mercy and Compaſſion; and haſt directed me to call upon thee in the Day of Trouble. This encourages me to cry to thee now for Help, when I am not able to help my ſelf. Let me, O Lord, ſee the Love of a tender Father, in all thy Dealings with me; and more particularly in this Exerciſe of my Patience. I do not repine at it, but acknowledge to thy Praiſe, that my Sins have loudly called for it; and that thou of very faithfulneſs, haſt cauſed me to be troubled. Let this Conſideration make me truly ſenſible of thy Kindneſs, and not only contented, but thankful for ſuch thy Proceeding towards me, in hope that the Sickneſs of my Body may be for the Health of my Soul, and may be a Means of promoting my Salvation in the Day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

II.

O Lord, thou knoweſt the Frailty of my natural Conſtitution, and how unfit I am to contend with a long Diſeaſe; be entreated to conſider my Infirmity, and in thy due Time to relieve me, leaſt my Patience be at length tired out, and ſo I fall under thy heavy Diſpleaſure. Be not extream to mark what I have done amiſs. But in the midſt of Judgment remember Mercy, and make me glad with the Joy of thy Countenance, I am intirely at thy Diſpoſal; cauſe all Things to work together for my Good, that whether by Life, or Death, I may glorify thy holy Name, through Jeſus Chriſt thy Son our Lord. *Amen.*

When

When Troubled with acute Pains.

O Bleſſed God, juſt and holy, who doeſt not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men; withhold not thy Aſſiſtance from me in this my ſharp and dolorous Condition. Thine Arrows ſtick faſt in me; and thy Hand preſſeth me ſore. I am made to poſſeſs [Months, *or*] Days of Vanity, and weariſome Nights are appointed to me. When I lie down, I ſay, when ſhall I ariſe, and the Night be gone? And I am full of Tolling to and fro unto the Dawning of the Day. I am feeble and ſore ſmitten; I have roared for the very Diſquietneſs of my Heart. My Sorrows are enlarged, my Wound is great, and my Soul is full of Trouble. And I have none to ſeek to for a Mitigation of my Pains, but to thee, O Lord. I freely own my Sufferings to be far leſs than I have deſerved. And that they have not been far worſe than they are, is purely of thy Goodneſs. But yet ſince they pierce deep, and are become almoſt too hard for me to bear, I am forced to call to thee for Aid, beſeeching thee not to puniſh me according to mine Iniquities, but to ſpare me for thy Mercies ſake. Endue me with that Patience, which may enable me readily to ſubmit to thy Chaſtiſement, and that hearty Repentance for all my Sins, which may invite thee to put an End to my Correction: Lay no more upon me than thou wilt capacitate me to bear. My Soul melteth away for very Heavineſs; comfort thou me, and let thy loving Mercy come unto me, O Lord, according to thy Word. Hear my Voice according

cording to thy Loving-kindneſs; and quicken me as thou art wont. Continue me under thy Rod, only ſo far as may be for thy Glory, and my own Advantage. Sanctify it to me whilſt I feel the Smart of it, and am made to groan and ſigh by reaſon of it; and when its Work ſhall be once done, (and Oh that it may not be long in doing!) remove it from me, and give me a freſh Occaſion to rejoice in thy ſaving Health, through Jeſus Chriſt our bleſſed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

Upon an Abatement of Pain.

O Give Thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious, and his Mercy endureth for ever. I called upon the Lord in my Neceſſity, and he hath heard me, and granted a Relaxation of my Pains. Even as a Father pitieth his own Children, ſo is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him. He knoweth whereof we are made, he remembreth that we are but Duſt, and cannot ſubſiſt, much leſs enjoy any Comfort or Eaſe, without his good Providence taking Care of us. Bleſſed be thy Name, O gracious God, and may my Soul, and all that is within me, laud and praiſe thee for the comfortable Change I feel in my ſelf, and the Eaſe and Refreſhment thou haſt granted me. The Sorrows of my Heart were enlarged; but now it is far otherwiſe with me. Thou haſt in a great Meaſure brought me out of my Trouble, which lay ſo heavy upon me, and forced me to make my Complaint to thee. What ſhall I return unto thee, O Lord, for all the Benefits that thou haſt done unto me? I will receive the Cup of Salvation, and will call

call upon the Name of the Lord. I will praiſe thee, and give thee Thanks in the beſt Manner I am able, will magnify thy Power, thy Goodneſs, and thy Faithfulneſs, and will be telling of thy Salvation from Day to Day. While I live will I praiſe the Lord; yea, as long as I have my Being, I will ſing Praiſes to thee, O God. And in my Diſtreſs I will always put my Truſt in thee, who haſt vouchſafed at this Time to deal ſo lovingly with me, and I will conſtantly join with the Church in its uſual Doxology; Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt; As it was in the Beginning, is now and ever ſhall be, World without End. *Amen.*

When Troubled in Mind.

O Thou great Phyſician of Souls, I come unto thee for Relief, againſt that heavy Preſſure that lies ſadly upon my Spirits at this Time. It is not without thy good Providence that ſo dreadful a Calamity has befallen me. And as it is thy Viſitation I willingly ſubmit to it, and ſhall ſet my ſelf to bear it without the leaſt Repining or Diſcontent. Though I am diſtreſſed, and greatly afflicted; yet I know it is thy Doing, and therefore to be born with an unwearied Patience. It is alſo of my own procuring, and ſo I have none to blame for it but my ſelf, and thoſe mine Iniquities which have called for it. Righteous art thou, O Lord, juſt is thy Judgment. Yet with an unfeigned Reſignation to thy Will, I find my ſelf conſtrained to ſupplicate thee for the Removal of it in thy due Time, that ſo I may be better able to do thee Service, than I am at pre-

preſent. Thou ſeeſt the woful State I am in; how my Mind is diſorder'd, my Thoughts are looſe and confuſed, my Underſtanding is clouded, my Affections are ungovernable, my whole Soul is out of Tune, and all my Faculties in a great Meaſure diſabled for a due Attendance upon thy Worſhip, and the faithful Obedience I owe to thy moſt holy Laws. Convince me hereby, how weak and frail I am of my ſelf, and in what continual Need I ſtand of thy Help, without which I can Diſcharge none of the Offices for which I came into this World. If thou withdraweſt my Breath, I die; if thou denieſt me the Aſſiſtance of thy Grace, I go on Sinning, and am utterly undone, if thou takeſt away my Comforts. I am ſad and dejected, my Spirits droop, and my Heart waxes faint. And to thee therefore, my only Refuge, I now betake my ſelf for Help. Refuſe not to ſpeak Comfort to my diſconſolate Soul; but viſit me with thy Salvation. Shew thy marvellous Loving-kindneſs, thou that art the Saviour of them who put their Truſt in thee. Reſtore me to a right Uſe of my Faculties, a Compoſure of Mind, and a Readineſs of Compliance with thy Will in all Things. Help me to the Enjoyment of my ſelf, and of thy Favour, and make me to hear of Joy and Gladneſs, that the Bones which thou haſt broken may rejoice. Save, Lord, and hear, O King of Heaven, when I call upon thee, through the Merits of thy only Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

For

For a Woman in Travel.

I.

O Eternal God, thou Father of Lights, from whom comes every good and perfect Gift, and who hast promised to hearken to those that call upon thee in their Necessities; Hear the Supplication of thine Handmaid, who feel my Travel coming upon me, and cry unto thee in the Anguish of my Soul. Watch over me for good; forgive my Sins; and moderate my Pains, if it be thy blessed Will. As thou hast given me a Power to conceive, grant me likewise Strength to bring forth, and that I may be a joyful Mother of a [*or*, of another] Child, endued with a sound and perfect Body, compleat in all its Parts, and fitted for all its proper Operations, and with an Understanding capable of knowing thee, and thy Ways, and with a Will disposed to love and fear thee. And grant moreover, that it may live to serve thee faithfully, and do Good in its Generation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

O Lord, the faster my Pangs come upon me, the more I beg thou wilt exert thy Strength for my Ease, that I be not overwhelmed with the Weight of them. Consider my Impotency, and support and deliver me. Be not wanting to me now that Trouble is hard at Hand, [*or*, lies heavy upon me,] and I have none that can give me Ease, or Safety, but thou alone. Forsake me not when my Strength faileth me, when my Spirits faint, and

and I cannot bear the Burden of my Sorrows without thy Aſſiſtance. Shew a Token upon me for good, that they who are about me may praiſe thy Name, and may rejoice to ſee that thou Lord, haſt holpen me, and comforted me, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

III.

FOrgive my Sins, O Lord; and take out of me all Inclination to whatever Sort of Wickedneſs. And whenever thou ſhalt take either Me, or the Child I labour of, out of this World, be graciouſly pleaſed to make us Partakers of thine everlaſting Kingdom, for the Love of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghoſt be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

After Deliverance in Child-Birth.

I.

THou haſt of thy great Goodneſs, O Lord, carried me ſafely through the great Pain and Peril of Child-Birth. And now that I have recover'd ſome Meaſure of Strength after my hard Labour, I deſire to pay my moſt humble Acknowledgments, and profoundeſt Adoration, to thee my Saviour and Deliverer! Lo! Children, and the Fruit of the Womb, are an Heritage and Gift that cometh of the Lord. To thee therefore be the Praiſe, that another Child is born into the World, that thou haſt preſerved me, its Mother, under the Sorrows with which I was encompaſſed; and that thou haſt reſtored me to ſome Degree of Health at preſent, and giveſt me Hope of having

having it perfected in a little Time. Go on, O Lord, to compleat and eſtabliſh it, if it ſeem good in thy Sight, and may be for thy Glory. And incline my Heart to ſhew forth thy Praiſe, not only with my Lips, but by the Holineſs and Uprightneſs of my Life in all Reſpects. Let a Senſe of thy Goodneſs be always upon my Mind; and raiſe in me ſuch unfeigned Love and Gratitude to thee, that I may never ceaſe to ſound forth thy Praiſes, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

O Be pleaſed to continue, encreaſe, and ſanctify thy Mercies to thine unworthy Servant, that I may live to thy Honour, by whoſe good Providence alone it is that I live at all; to perfect what thou haſt thus far wrought in me, and ſo to eſtabliſh my Health, as that I may be fitted to praiſe and ſerve thee; and to preſerve me from Power of the Tempter, and the Corruption of mine own evil Heart, that I miſpend none of the Time thou granteſt me for better Purpoſes, but my whole Study may be to obſerve thy Statutes, and to be every Day improving in my Obedience to them. Lead me by thy Counſels here, and hereafter receive me into Glory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

III.

AND caſt an Eye of Pity upon my poor Infant, who is not able to pray for it ſelf; and ſince thou haſt brought him [*or*, her] into the World, may it pleaſe thee to preſerve h in it, that he [*or*, ſhe] may be an uſeful Inſtrument of thy Glory, by ſerving thee faith-

faithfully, and doing good in h Generation. Grant h the Benefit of Baptiſmal Regeneration, that being born in Sin, and a Child of Wrath, it may be renewed and made a Child of Grace, and being received into Covenant with thee, may be ſtedfaſt in Faith, joyful through Hope, and rooted in Charity, and may ſo paſs through the Waves of this troubleſome World, that finally it may come to the Land of everlaſting Life, there to reign with thee, World without End, through Jeſus Chriſt thy Son, our bleſſed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

For a Young Perſon that is Sick.

I.

O God, whoſe never failing Providence ordereth all Things both in Heaven and Earth, though thou haſt laid thy Hand upon me, and caſt me upon the Bed of Sickneſs, yet nevertheleſs my Hope is, and ſhall be in thee. Be thou my Deliverer, and Cure my Diſeaſe which lies ſo hard upon me. Spare me, I beſeech thee; and take me not away before I am come to Years of Diſcretion, and to a right Underſtanding of thine infinite Love to me, and the Love and Duty I owe to thee. May it pleaſe thee to reſtore me to my former Health; and give me Grace to ſpend what Time thou ſhalt allow me more, to thoſe great Ends for which thou alloweſt it. Or elſe take me to thy ſelf into thoſe bleſſed Regions, whither my Saviour Chriſt is gone before, to reign with thee in Bliſs and Felicity. This I beg for the ſake of the ſame thy Son, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

HEar me, O God, and be merciful unto me; Oh remember not the Sins and Offences of my Youth; but according to thy Mercy, think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy Goodneſs. If thou wilt, thou canſt make me whole; or if thou calleſt me hence, thou canſt make me happy. Diſpoſe of me as ſhall ſeem beſt in thy Sight; and prepare me, I beſeech thee, for whatſoever thou deſigneſt for me. Thou art my Helper and Redeemer: Make no long tarrying, O my God.

For One of Middle-Age.

O Almighty and everlaſting God, thy Goodneſs to me has been wonderful in giving me a Being, in preſerving me hitherto, in ſupplying me with the Neceſſaries of this Life; but eſpecially, and above all, in giving thine only begotten and dearly beloved Son to become Incarnate, and Suffer, and Die in my ſtead, to open a Paſſage for me to another and better State. And though thy Hand lies heavy upon me at preſent, I cannot doubt but it is in Mercy, and for my Good. For which Reaſon I beſeech thee to ſanctify it to me, that it may be a Means of weaning my Affections from this ſhort Life, and its tranſitory Enjoyments, which I plainly ſee, are utterly unable to preſerve either Life, or Health, when thou calleſt for it; and muſt certainly leave thoſe in a hopeleſs Condition, who have nothing better to truſt to. Let it alſo make me truly ſenſible of the real Value of that Health I now want, and of all the other Bleſſings

thou haſt given me to partake of, and put me upon perfecting my Repentance, before it be too late. I am at this Time in the Prime of my Age and Strength, but as eaſily to be cut down by thy Hand, as the Graſs by the Hand of the Mower. Suffer me not to ſet my Affections upon any Thing here below, but upon the eternal Enjoyment of thee, and thine ineſtimable Rewards in Heaven, nor to reckon upon the wonted Vigour of my Age, but upon my preſent Inability, and the Nearneſs I am poſſibly in to Death, and a future State. Teach me a perfect Submiſſion to thy holy Will, that I may Account of Life, only as an Opportunity of doing thee farther Service, and may uſe it, whilſt continued to me, to be in a greater Readineſs for Death, that whenſoever that comes, I may receive its Summons without Surprize, and may willingly quit all that I have here, to depart and be with Chriſt, which is far better. My Time at beſt is ſhort; but if thou art pleaſed to make it ſhorter than might have been expected, by taking me away in the Midſt of my Days, I commit my ſelf into thy Hands, to do with me as ſeemeth thee good. Only I beſeech thee, remove me not hence, till thou ſhalt have fitted me for a better and more laſting State, through Jeſus Chriſt my only Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

For One that is grown Old.

MY Life, O Lord, draws towards a Concluſion; and I eſteem my ſelf as one of thoſe that are going down to the Grave; and conſidering the Years I have already lived, I cannot

cannot think it ſtrange, if I ſee no more good Days in this World. Others that are younger may die quickly; but I know aſſuredly that I muſt be gone in a very little Time. The Thread of my Life wears off apace, ſo that I cannot but ſuppoſe it to be near an End. The Number of my Days is already extended beyond that of my Contemporaries, moſt of whom are gone before me, and I am not ſo vain as to imagine, that I can be exempt from that Mortality, which is the common Fate of all Men. Beſides, this Sickneſs is a freſh *Memento* to me, to put me in Mind of the tottering State of my earthly Tabernacle, and that I know not how ſpeedily it may poſſibly be diſſolv'd. Wherefore my great Care is to ſee, that my Peace be made with thee, before I go thither, whence there is no Returning. Help me, I beſeech thee, to do it ſo ſucceſsfully, as that I may always have my Loins girt and my Lamp burning, and be like thoſe who wait for the coming of the Bridegroom, in a Readineſs whenſoever thou ſhalt call for me, whether it be at the Cock-crowing, or the Morning, or perhaps this very Evening. Let thy Time be mine, that whenever Death appears, it may not find me unprepar'd to receive it as thy Meſſenger, to conduct me hence. In a long Courſe of many Years, I have committed Multitudes of Sins, whereby I have contracted a heavy Load of Guilt, and muſt be irrecoverably undone without thy Pity. But with thee, O Lord, there is Mercy that thou mighteſt be feared; and with thy Son is plenteous Redemption. For his Sake forgive me all my paſt Tranſgreſſions, and enable me to ſpend what little of my Life is yet remaining, in thy Fear, and to thy Glory. Cleanſe and

purify me, that I may have no terrifying Guilt adhere to me, to make me afraid of my latter End. Strengthen me by thy Grace and holy Spirit, to fight out the good Fight of Faith; that continuing thine to the laſt, and being faithful whilſt I live, I may be eternally ſaved after Death, through the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

For One that has too long deferred Repentance.

O Bleſſed, and Holy Lord God, who would'ſt not any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance. Be merciful to me a guilty Sinner, who have long neglected my Duty to thee, and mine own main Intereſt; till my Sins are gone over my Head, and are as a ſore Burden, too heavy for me to bear. Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant; for in thy Sight ſhall no Man living be juſtified. And if no Man, not the beſt of Men, and the moſt righteous, much leſs ſo vile a Sinner as I have been. I have provok'd thy Divine Majeſty, by a long Series of Wickedneſs, for which thou mighteſt juſtly have long ſince cut me off, and given me my Portion amongſt the Devils and damned Spirits. But bleſſed be thy Name, thou haſt exerciſed a great deal of Patience and Long-ſuffering towards me. And I hope it is not in vain that thou haſt thus graciouſly born with me. For I am now fully convinc'd of my own Folly, and the Evil of my Ways, and do repent, and abhor my ſelf in Duſt and Aſhes. Do not thou abhor me too, nor ſhut up thy Bowels of Compaſſion from me. Behold me not as a Sinner,

Sinner, but as one for whom Chriſt has died, and as a Penitent heartily grieved for my paſt Diſobedience, and earneſtly deſirous both of thy Pardon, and of Grace to walk more holily for the future. It is much too long that I have deferr'd my Amendment and Reformation; but by thy Bleſſing and Aſſiſtance, I am fully reſolv'd to do it no longer. Help me to put theſe good Reſolutions in Practice, renouncing all my moſt beloved Sins, and earneſtly endeavouring to be upright and unblameable in all Manner of Converſation; that to Day, whilſt it is called to Day, I may hear thy Voice, and never more dare to harden my Heart againſt it. I know not what a Day may bring forth; and for this Reaſon am not willing to truſt to To-morrow, when poſſibly it may be too late for me to think of Repenting to Salvation. Turn thou me, good Lord, and ſo ſhall I be turned; but do it, I beſeech thee, immediately and out of Hand. Turn me from all mine Iniquities, and make me to ſerve thee acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear. Make me heartily aſhamed of my Undutifulneſs and Diſobedience hitherto, that I ſhould have dared to offend ſo good and gracious a God, and ſtir up my Heart to ſerve thee better for the future, that denying all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, I may live righteouſly, ſoberly, and godly in this preſent World. Looſe me from all the Bonds of my Sins; and conduct me to everlaſting Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

For One that is not duly Grieved for his Sins.

AGainſt thee, O Lord, have I ſinned, and done Evil in thy Sight; and what ſhall I now ſay unto thee? I deſire to be deeply humbled, for all my undutiful Carriage towards thee. But to my Shame I find, that I am not ſo duly affected with my Guilt and Folly, as I ought to be. I have highly offended thee, and miſerably endanger'd my own Salvation; and though I ſee and know this, yet I find by ſad Experience, that I am not ſo throughly grieved at the Sight of my Sins, as were to be wiſh'd, and as I truly deſire to be. I hope there is no Sin that has its full Dominion over me; none that I do not unfeignedly long and ſtrive to ſhake off, and free my ſelf from it, ſo far as I ſhall be able. As I alſo moſt earneſtly deſire and beg the Forgiveneſs of them all. Only I am concern'd and amaz'd that I ſhould not be more ſenſibly griev'd at the Conſideration of them. Touch my Soul, O bleſſed God, with ſuch an affecting Perception of my Wickedneſs, that I may continually lament and bewail it, that Rivers of Tears may run down mine Eyes, becauſe I have not kept thy Law, and I may mourn in ſecret for my Tranſgreſſions, may confeſs mine Iniquities, and be more heartily ſorry for my Sin, even with a Sorrow that may bring forth a Repentance to Salvation, that is never to be repented of. O Lord, who cauſedſt Water to flow out of the Rock of Stone, break this ſtony Heart of mine, or rather take it away from me, and give me inſtead of it a Heart of Fleſh, capable of thoſe Im-

Impreſſions, that a guilty Conſcience is wont to make upon a returning Penitent. Make me to loath my Sins, and my ſelf becauſe of them; and to humble my ſelf before thee, and in the moſt ſubmiſſive manner to ſupplicate thy Grace and holy Spirit, to lead me in the Way of Life, and never to give over till I ſhall have obtain'd a Bleſſing, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Upon a Relapſe into Sin.

O Lord my God, I know not how to lift up mine Eyes unto Heaven, but am forced with the humble Publican, to ſmite upon my Breaſt, and call upon thee to be merciful to me a Sinner, when I reflect how highly I have provok'd thee againſt mine own Soul. I have ſinned againſt thee from Time to Time, and aggravated my Sins with many heinous and dreadful Circumſtances, whereby to render them ſo much the more provoking. And though I have reſolv'd, and promis'd, and vow'd an Amendment, yet have I broken my Faith, and relapſed into my former Guilt, and thereby cut my ſelf off from all Right to thy Promiſes. And what can I now plead for my ſelf? From the Bar of thy Juſtice I fly to the Throne of thy Mercy, beſeeching thee to be favourable to me, becauſe thou delighteſt in Mercy, and not let me be miſerable, though I have taken the ready Road to Miſery. I have perverted my Ways, and run upon Deſtruction with my Eyes open. And though I cannot ſay I have quite forgotten thee my God, yet I muſt acknowledge to my own Sorrow and Shame, that I have offended thee more heinouſly by ſinning againſt thee, when I knew

my self in thy Presence, and when I was fully convinc'd how evil and bitter a Thing Sin is, how extreamly displeasing to Thee, and of what pernicious Consequence to my self, and had profess'd, and often Times taken the Sacrament upon it, that I would serve thee faithfully all my Days. My Conscience accuses me; my Heart condemns me; and thou who art greater than my Heart, and knowest all Things, may'st justly stop thine Ears, when I cry unto thee in the Anguish of my Soul. I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee; and am no more worthy to be call'd thy Son. I have sinned against the Light of the Gospel, and thine infinite Love to me; against the Terror of thy Threatenings, and the Charms of thy Mercy; against the Rebukes of thy Spirit, and the Checks of my own Conscience; against my solemnest Vows and Engagements, and when I had fully purpos'd an Amendment. Yet is not my Sin too great for thee to pardon, or to remove from me, that I never more repeat it. If thou wilt, thou can'st make me whole again. And the more my Wickedness has abounded, the more therefore let thy Grace and Good-will abound. *Absolve me from the Guilt, deliver me from the Power, cleanse me from the Pollution, save me from the Punishment, of this and all other my Offences,* reconcile me to thy self here, and crown me with immortal Glory hereafter, through Jesus Christ thy Son our only Mediator and Redeemer. *Amen.*

For a Right Uſe of the Good Things of this World.

THou, O Lord, art the Father of Mercies, and the ſole Author of all the Bleſſings I am now, or have at any Time been Partaker of; Let me never have Cauſe to repent, that thou haſt beſtow'd the ſame upon me. Vouchſafe me ſuch a right Notion, and Eſteem of all earthly Priviledges and Enjoyments, that I may never be brought under the Power of any of them, but may conſtantly uſe that Portion of them thou conferreſt upon me, with Temperance, and Sobriety, and Charity, for the Time they are continued to me, and with a ready Diſpoſition of Mind to part with them, whenſoever thou ſhalt ſee fit to ſtrip me, either of the whole, or of any Part of them, and with ſuch Heavenly-mindedneſs, and an Eye ſo immoveably fix'd, upon the unconceivable Rewards of the other State, that I may never dare to ſet theſe in Competition with them. Incline my Heart to a conſtant Solicitude for another Life, and a Care to lay up to my ſelf Treaſure in Heaven, by a good Improvement of whatever I enjoy here below. Grant I may never be high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, who gives all Things richly to enjoy, may be rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, and ſo may lay up to my ſelf a good Foundation againſt the Time to come, that I may lay hold on eternal Life. Make me truly ſenſible, how impoſſible it is to ſerve both God and Mammon, and that if I immoderately love the World and

the

the Things in it, this is a certain Sign that the Love of God is not in me. And awaken my ſluggiſh Soul, that it may open its Eyes, and look paſt this preſent State, and aſpire after thoſe true Riches, to which all that this World contains bears no Manner of Proportion. Be my God and my Guide in all my Concerns; And grant me ſo to paſs through Things Temporal, that I finally loſe not the Things Eternal. This I beg for thy Mercies Sake, in thy Son our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghoſt, ever one God World without End. *Amen.*

For a truly Chriſtian Behaviour in all Reſpects.

I.

O Eternal and everlaſting God, who hateſt Iniquities, and can'ſt not look upon the leaſt Sin with Approbation; Diſpoſe me for a due Attendance to the State thou haſt placed me in, and the Preparation I am neceſſarily to make for another, before I am ſummon'd hence. Work in me both to will, and to do of thy good Pleaſure, that ſo I may live in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs, and may paſs the Time of thy ſojourning here in thy Fear, exerciſing my ſelf continually to have a Conſcience void of Offence towards God, and towards Man. Open mine Eyes, that I may ſee the wondrous Things of thy Law. Enlighten my Mind that I may know thee; and not with a barren and uſeleſs Knowledge, but ſuch as may produce the happy Fruits of good Works. Put thy Law in my Heart, and write

write it in my inward Man, that in nothing I may dare to ſin againſt thee, but my whole Life may be a continual Study to pleaſe thee. Make me ſorrowful for my Sins, and intent upon a better Obedience for the future, humble under thy Chaſtiſements, devout in thy Service, thankful for all thy Mercies, fearful to diſpleaſe thee, and deſirous above all Things to approve my ſelf to thee. Remind me of my Duty to my Neighbour, that I may love him as my ſelf, and do to all others, as I would they ſhould do to me, being obedient to my Governors, whether Spiritual or Temporal, reſpectful to my other Superiors; Loving and Uſeful, and Obliging to my Equals; Affable and Courteous to my Inferiors; Juſt to all, and Charitable and Aſſiſtant to thoſe that are in Need. And put me upon a diligent Watch over my ſelf, that I indulge no unreaſonable Luſt or Paſſion, no Vice or Immorality of any Kind, but may be progreſſive in Goodneſs, may cleanſe my ſelf from all my Defilements, and may aim at being Holy as he which has called me is Holy. Thus I beſeech thee, O Gracious God, to grant that I may both perceive and know, what Things I ought to do, and alſo may have Grace and Power faithfully to fulfil the ſame, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

O God, though my Spirit be willing, yet the Fleſh is weak, and I can do no good Thing without thy Aſſiſtance. Do thou ſtrengthen me by thy good Spirit, to bear up againſt all the Oppoſition that ſhall befal me in the Performance of my Duty, whether from

from Men or Devils. Let no Temptation be too powerful for me to withstand it with Courage and an undaunted Resolution to proceed in my Integrity. Nourish all the Seeds of Grace that are sown in my Heart, and make them fruitful unto every good Word and Work. Let my Light so shine before Men, that they may see my good Works, and glorify thee my Father who art in Heaven. Make me a faithful Steward of all those Talents wherewith thou hast entrusted me, for the Good either of my self or others, that I may not be afraid to give up my Accounts, when the Lord shall come to reckon with me. Give me the encrease of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and all other Christian Graces; and that I may obtain that which thou dost promise, make me ever to love that which thou dost command, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

III.

O Thou God of Peace, sanctify me wholly; and I pray thee, that my whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, be preserved Blameless, unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

II.

A Ge-

A General Thanksgiving for Mercies receiv'd.

I.

ALmighty and moſt loving Father, the Father of Mercies, and God of all Conſolation, I here proſtrate my ſelf at thy Feet, humbly acknowledging thy Bounty and Goodneſs to me, deſiring to bleſs and praiſe thy holy Name, both now and for evermore, for ſuch thine abundant Loving-kindneſs. It was of thine own good Pleaſure, that thou at firſt gaveſt me a Being, when I was not: It is of thy moſt gracious Hand over me, that I am ſtill preſerv'd in it, notwithſtanding all the Dangers to which I lie continually expos'd. Through thy immenſe Patience and Compaſſion towards me I am now on this Side the Grave, and everlaſting Miſery; for I have deſerv'd nothing of thee, but thy heavy Wrath, and implacable Indignation. Yet doſt thou not fail to multiply thy Bleſſings upon me from Day to Day, Bleſſings both Spiritual and Temporal, for this Life and in order to a better. Praiſed be thy Name, O Lord, for that thou haſt dealt thus lovingly with me; While I live will I praiſe the Lord, yea, as long as I have any Being, I will ſing Praiſes to my God. My Mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy Righteouſneſs and Salvation all the Day long, for I know no End thereof. Bleſſed be the Lord my God, who only doth wondrous Things. And bleſſed be the Name of his Majeſty for ever: And all the Earth ſhall be fill'd with his Majeſty. *Amen, Amen.*

II. Thou

II.

THou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; for thou haſt created all Things, and for thy Pleaſure they are, and were created. May Men and Angels never ceaſe to Worſhip and Adore thee, and Laud and Magnify thy bleſſed Name, for thine infinite Goodneſs to all the Sons of Men. For my ſelf, it ſhall be my conſtant Study, to expreſs my unfeigned Gratitude, for the innumerable Benefits I have receiv'd from thy Bounty. Which are as great, as they are every Way undeſerv'd, and ſo call for the utmoſt Returns of Duty and Thankfulneſs to the Author of them. All Praiſe, all Glory be to thee for my Creation, Preſervation, and all the Bleſſings of this Life; for my Health and Strength, my Reaſon and Underſtanding, my Peace and Quiet of Mind, my Credit and Reputation, the Plenty of outward good Things wherewith thou haſt bleſſed me, my Friends and Relations, and Benefactors, or whatever tends to make my Being here Comfortable. It is all owing to thee alone; And to thee therefore be the Praiſe throughout all Ages. *Amen.*

III.

BUT above all, may my Soul, and all that is within me, Glorify thee, O Lord, for that moſt gracious Proviſion thou haſt vouchſafed to make for me, in order to a better Life, when this ſhall have an End. For my Redemption by the Death and Paſſion of my bleſſed Saviour, for the glad Tidings of the Goſpel, which not only hath brought Life and Immortality to Light, and ſhewn us the

Way to it, now open'd through his Merits, to all that duly endeavour after it, but has moreover informed us what Duty is requir'd in order to it, and how we muſt be qualified before we can be thought meet to be Partakers of it; for the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* on the Day of *Pentecoſt*; for the glorious Effect of that Deſcent in the ſpeedy and miraculous Propagation of Chriſtianity through the World; for that Aſſiſtance which is yet continu'd to my ſelf and others, for enabling us to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are call'd; for thy Word and Sacraments; for the Examples of thy Saints and Martyrs, of the holy Apoſtles, and above all of our bleſſed Lord himſelf, who was made like to us in all Things, Sin only excepted; and for all the Means of Grace, and Hopes of Glory that we enjoy through him. Oh that I could praiſe thee as I ought, for theſe thine unſpeakable Mercies; and as the bleſſed Spirits above praiſe thee; that as Heaven and Earth are full the Majeſty of thy Glory, ſo my Heart and my Mouth may be duly filled with thy Praiſe, who art the Author of all this Good to me! However, ſo far as my preſent State will admit of, I will not refrain my Tongue from proclaiming thy wondrous Works. I will give Thanks unto thee, for that thou haſt done; and will hope in thy Name all the Days of my Life. *Amen.*

IV.

LET a Senſe, I beſeech thee, O Lord, of theſe thy great Mercies be conſtantly fix'd in my Mind, and ſo deeply rooted and ſettled there, as that I may never make thee any

any unequal Returns for them; but all the Powers of my Soul may exert themſelves to ſet forth thy Glory. Fill my Mind with ſuch unfeigned Gratitude to thee, as may never ceaſe to ſhew forth it ſelf, not by a bare Return of Praiſe, but likewiſe by the Holineſs and Uprightneſs of my Converſation. Make me to be in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long, and never let it enter into my Heart, to do any Thing unworthy of ſuch exceſſive Goodneſs to me; but that I may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

V.

HOly, holy, holy, Lord God of Hoſts; Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord moſt high. Bleſſing, and Glory, and Wiſdom, and Thankſgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might, be unto our God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM

PAge 5. Line 13. *for* [illegible] *r.* quæ; p. 15. l. 28. *for* buſy, *r.* but that; p. 16. l. penult. *r.* wilt; p. 48. l. 3. *r.* than; p. 49. l. 10. *r.* Intereſts; p. 65. l. 17. *for* of, *r.* to; p. 95. l. 29. *r.* Raek, & l. ult. r. *Euſeb.* lib. 8. p. 105. r. *Pſal.* 106; p. 108. l. 24. *r.* Inſomuch; p. 121. l. 5. *r.* Whereas; p. 127. l. 11. *r.* Cell; p. 150. l. 21. *r.* Exemplarineſs; p. 165. l. ult. r. *Charis*; p. 166. l. 24. r. *Hermagathus*; p. 173. l. 33. r. *Haplous*; p. 179. l. 23. *r.* thy humble; p. 198. l. 17. *r.* delighteſt; p. 214. l. 14. r. ἐρανόθεν, & l. 34. r. Ἀνίκητον; p. 247 l. 23. *dele* l; p. 252. l. 36. *for* it, *r.* he; p. 259. l. ult. r. πλείας; p. 260. l. 11. *for* are, *r.* were; p. 279. l. 26. *r.* To which End; p. 280. l. 38. *r.* the only Evidence; p. 300. l. 26. *for* of, *r.* or; p. 310. l. 34. r. ἐνδὲν; p. 326. l. 12. *r.* exerciſed in; p. 363. l. 7. *for* thy, *r.* this; p. 367. l. 1. *r.* Dominion; p. 406. l. 4. *for* whoſe, *r.* whom an; p. 413. l. 20. for an Interrogation, put a full Point; p. 414. l. 7. *r.* ſlight; p. 424. l. 2. *r.* Doings, l. 33. r. τελεσιχλισμὸν; p. 431. l. 24. *r.* withhold; p. 463. l. 19. *r.* from the.